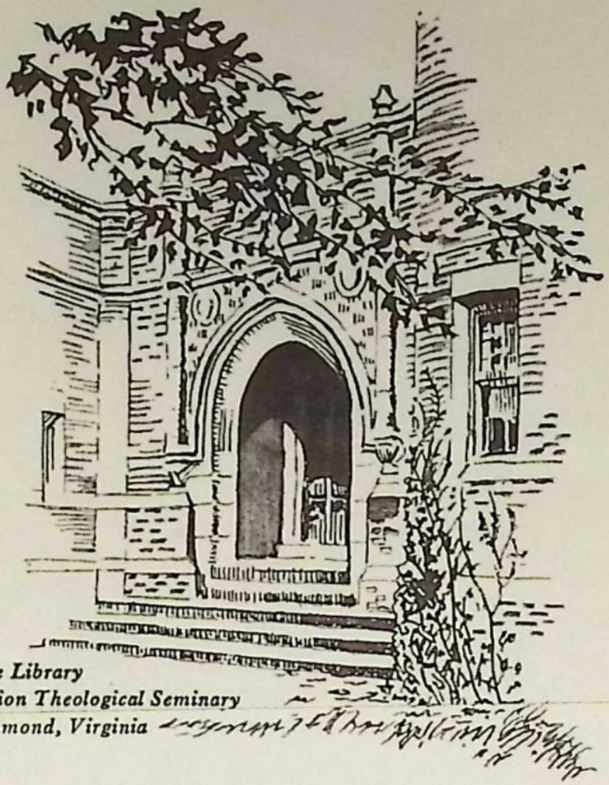
Call of Christ



The Library
Union Theological Seminary
Richmond, Virginia

Gift of

Dr. W.W. Moore

CALL OF CHRIST:

A Story of Foreign Missions

BY

REV. R. H. CROZIER, D. D.

AUTHOR OF "FIERY TRIALS," "GOLDEN RULE,"
"THE END OF THE WORLD," ETC.

WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS,
RICHMOND, VA.

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

Rare
BZ.
5
C955
C

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Two Chums	9
II.	Disinherited	24
III.	Hydrophobia and Love	41
IV.	Off to China	59
V.	Tekel	72
VI.	Perplexity	89
VII.	A Tempting Proposal	104
VIII.	A Woman's Dilemma	119
IX.	A Sad Event	136
X.	A Vital Question	144
XI.	Hard Trials	164
XII.	Disappointments Deep	179
XIII.	Anxiety	196
XIV.	Finalities	209

PREFACE.

"CALL of the Wild" and "Call of the South" and I know not how many other "calls" are books that have been extensively read. The thought occurred to me that there is room in the literary world for a volume bearing the title "Call of Christ," which is the most important of all calls. The execution of that thought has resulted in the production of the Call of Christ: A story of Foreign Missions.

A word or two in the way of apology or explanation may not be amiss, even if unnecessary I have heard readers of novels complain of the long descriptions of places, persons and things that fill the pages of works of fiction: they are generally *skipped.* For this reason I determined to avoid them. This necessitated the substitution of the dramatic for the narrative form. Dialogue, or conversation, has in the present story taken the place of description. This is a decided advantage in some respects, for you can form a better conception of a man's character by hearing him talk than by reading delineations of his character, however accurate they may be.

Perhaps the captious critic may suggest gently that the dialogues may be lacking in consecutive pertinency, but we venture to hope he will not affirm that they are unnatural. The author thinks that they are about such as would have occurred under the circumstances described. He has taken advantage of this style of writing to briefly defend some important truths and combat some popular errors, which would be objectionable in mere narration.

The author would not venture to write a love story simply for the sake of the story itself; but he knows that nothing pleases young people more than a love story, hence he has made the attempt to combine religion and love in such a way as to secure a careful reading of the contents of the whole volume. The effort is made to show the superiority of divine love over human.

Of course, inaccuracies of chronology and locality will be pardoned by the generous reader in a work like this.

This story is by no means a work of fiction, as some of the incidents came under the author's observation. The scenes of the revival described actually occurred. The young man described under the name of Bernard Graham was a friend of the

author, and he was really disinherited by his father because of his decision to preach.

If this little book should fall into the hands of some young man who may be on the ridge of hesitation, and it should be even slightly instrumental in helping him to a decision in favor of becoming a Foreign Missionary, one of the author's objects in publishing this unpretentious volume will be achieved.

Palestine, Texas.

CALL OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

Two Chums.

THE University of Mississippi since its organization away back in the forties of last century has sent forth thousands of young men intellectually equipped for the clashing conflicts of human existence. If we could trace the footsteps of each one of them along the pathway of their different careers, it would add some interesting volumes to the libraries of biography. I, by no means affirm that any great number of them have performed daring deeds in the political, military or literary world worthy of preservation in the tomes of history. In fact, as education goes it is no discredit to their honored Alma Mater that the large majority have achieved nothing to justify any other inscription on their tombstones than the simple statement that they lived and they died. Any other epitaph would be gross injustice to truth. But the memory of two, out of thousands, deserves rescue from that obscurity which is never disturbed by the invasions of

the historian. They are here introduced to the reader under the names respectively of Bernard Graham and Mark Comerson, both of whom were room-mates and members of the same class. As will no doubt be expected, they were warm friends as devoted to each other, it is not hazardous to say, as were David and Jonathan of Biblical fame, or Damon and Pythias whom profane history has raised to immortal distinction. Well defined attributes marked their characters, some of which made them similar in disposition, thought and manner, while others made them widely different. Among their fellow-students both were recognized for solidity of attainments, and somewhat envied for brilliancy of mind. Bernard was of quick, nervous temperament, while Mark was slow of motion—at times sluggish—which gave him the appearance of lack of energy; the truth was, when he was aroused he was energetic enough. But there was one respect in which they were as widely apart as the poles: Bernard was a Christian whose consecration it was hardly possible to doubt, while Mark, tho' rigidly moral, made no pretension to religion. However, it was not till the last year of their college life that Bernard made a public profession of his faith and attached himself to the church. A great revival had swept over

the little, old-fashioned city of Oxford, and extended to the students of the University, which was distant scarcely a mile from the courthouse. Many of the "boys" declared their purpose to live for Christ, and emphasized their profession by uniting with the various churches. One of the very first to do this was Bernard Graham, one of whose marked traits of character was strenuous enthusiasm. While inflamed with glowing zeal, yet he was not extravagant and noisy in demonstration; but, looking neither to the right nor left hand, pursued a straightforward, dignified course that impressed every acquaintance with the idea that he was a young man of decision and firmness. Quite a number of the students who had been loud and boisterous in their profession soon made it evident that their overt conversion was merely a shallow, superficial, temporary change that had never touched their real, religious sensibilities; but no one ever thought that Bernard would make the least movement in the direction of retrogression.

It might seem a little strange that Mark witnessed the solemn scenes of this same revival without the least disturbance of his religious emotions, but such was the fact and the waves of heavenly influences rolled over him, leaving him standing in the

wave in utter, imperviousness to all feelings of repentance. Not that he was conscious of offering any special resistance to the Holy Ghost, but he was simply not awakened at that particular time to the importance of accepting the divine invitations. A great many Christian people, who have carefully studied the workings of divine Grace would affirm that Mark was stubborn in his opposition; but that was not true. Why and how he could pass through so many revival scenes unmoved, we can no more explain than we can tell why the Lord healed, by miraculous means, only one out of the many lepers that were in Israel. We should not, therefore, be too hasty in condemning the impenitent for seeming persistance in rebellion simply because they manifest aversion to accepting the first offer of salvation that presents itself. Bernard talked to his friend even with tears in his eyes, and entreated him to forsake the broad road to everlasting ruin, but it appeared to be all in vain. In response to his ardent affectionate urging Mark said:

"Why Bernie, you would not have me act the hypocrite, would you, and say that I am a Christian, when I know I am not?"

"No, no, of course not, by any means, but you certainly realize that you are a sinner?"

"I suppose I belong to that class, Bernie. I was

taught to think that in almost my very childhood. I believe that man is born in a state of guilt and misery. As the catechism teaches us he is totally depraved. I suppose you would pronounce me orthodox so far as theory is concerned, but there are some things about what you call conversion that beget down-right confusion in my mind. I do not understand what is meant by this change of heart upon which the preachers so vehemently insist."

"That is all simple enough, Mark. When the heart is changed in the process of conversion you love the things which you once hated and hate the things you once loved—sinful things I mean. Surely you can tell whether such a radical change as that has occurred within you?"

"I am not conscious of any change of that kind. I have never really hated religious things in my life. I have been brought up by religious parents and have attended Sunday-school and church services as far back as I can remember, and have heard it preached that I, in my natural state, hated God and holy things."

"On the other hand," said Bernard sorrowfully, "I have had no parental training along that line. My mother is no Christian and my father is a rabid infidel, I regret to say, and seems to hate, with all his soul, everything that is connected with the church."

"But you have not been influenced by his example, Bernie."

"No, thank God, I have never had the least inclination to follow in his footsteps. So far from it, the truth is his profanity and blasphemy have always filled me with horror and disgust."

"It is a wonder you do not reprove him, even if he is your father."

"I ventured once to do so."

"What was the consequence?"

"I was cursed for my presumption and impudence, as he called it."

"What will he do when he hears that you have joined the church?"

"I do not know, but I am sure he will not approve of it. He may make sport of me or he may curse—according to the humor he is in, when he learns about it."

"But you need not tell him, Bernie."

"Tell him!" exclaimed Bernard with energy." I shall be sure to tell him. I cannot be a mere secret Christian. I have made a public profession of my faith and I shall be loyal to Christ, if I die for it. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' says the Master. My mother will make no violent remonstrance, but my father will oppose me with anger or contempt. So I anticipate,

and am prepared for it. But I fear his rage will exceed all bounds when I inform him that I intend to be a preacher."

"You a preacher!" cried Mark in the greatest surprise. "You never told me that before." "I have said nothing about it, because I wanted to be certain of my own mind. I have always had the idea—tho' somewhat vague—that I would adopt that as my vocation. But now I have fully determined." "Why, Bernie, you utterly amaze me! I have never had any other thought than that you would be a lawyer. It strikes me that you are so well fitted for that profession, I am afraid that you will miss your calling if you go to preaching." "I have at times vaguely thought that I would like to study law, but recently I have heard the call of Christ in such an unequivocal way that I dare not disregard it."

"What is the call of Christ, Bernie?"

"You have read your Bible enough to know that the last words of Jesus were *'go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'* That is the call of Christ. It is the great commission. It is not for any special class, tho' primarily addressed to his immediate followers. It has come to me so clearly that after mature deliberation, my determination is to offer myself as a candidate for the ministry. If you could enter into my feelings and my

convictions of duty you would not express any surprise at my determination."

"You speak so confidently that I am sure you are acting on what you conceive to be reliable evidence. But you are not superstitious enough to say that the call has come in an audible voice? I once heard a preacher tell my father that the Lord spoke to him, face to face, and told him to abandon the play handles for the pulpit. Boy as I was, I could not but laugh at him."

"He was uneducated, I suppose?"

"Certainly, for no man who reads anything would say that such miracles—indeed, any kind, are performed now."

"I by no means, claim that any direct miracle has been wrought in my case. I have heard no voice and had no startling vision like that of Peter when he was sent for by Cornelius. I just feel it my duty so strongly that I am afraid to decline. But, I think you are too fast when you say no miracle is performed now, for there is one, which is the standing miracle of the ages, and you have seen it with your own eyes."

"What miracle is that, Bernie?"

"It is the miracle of conversion."

"Do you think that is a miracle?"

"I do not know what else to call it."

"Where is the miracle in it?"

"I will try to explain it. I knew a man in my town who was the worst character I ever saw—a drinking, quarrelsome, fighting fellow, always seeking difficulties. Suddenly at a camp-meeting he was converted. People laughed at the idea of his holding out. Nearly everybody said he would go back to his wallow-like the hog, and be worse than he was before. But they were mistaken. He is now one of the best men I ever saw. He is the very opposite of what he once was. He is now sober, peaceful and kind-hearted. Everybody loves him. The change in him is astounding. What can you call it but a miracle?"

"It is surely a remarkable instance of reformative," said Mark thoughtfully.

"It is a reformation answered Bernard with emphasis," that has revolutionized the man's whole nature. He shows by his conduct that he loves things which he once hated, and hates things which he once loved. That, it seems to me, is a greater miracle than healing a palsied arm. Any surgeon can amputate a diseased limb, but nothing, except divine power can make a man love holy things."

"I admit," replied Mark seriously and in a tone indicative of reflection," that the instance to which you have referred seems miraculous, but I never have

undergone any such change." "No, Mark," replied Bernard affectionately, "and you never can so long as you are as moral as you are. What change could there be in your outward conduct? You are too good a boy ever to furnish such an instance of conversion as I have mentioned. But some day—I hope soon—you will be shaken out of your lethargy, and you will be conscious of a change in your feelings. But tell me candidly, has it never occurred to you that some day, you will be a preacher. Do you not remember what the phrenologist who examined your cranium the other day, said about it?"

"About my preaching in twenty years?"

"Yes, that was it."

"It convinced me that he did not understand his business. Nothing is farther from my intentions. With all respect for you, Bernie, but I do not care to spend my life in poverty. Preachers come to our house frequently—all sorts of them—and I have heard too much of their trials and sufferings ever to make the ministry my profession. Some of them made the impression on me that they were half-starved. I was only a boy, but I said to myself I would never be a preacher. No, no, excuse me, please."

"It is true," said Bernard slowly "that the man who goes into the ministry for the purpose of money-

making will be most grievously disappointed. I do not know of any respectable vocation that furnishes more scant opportunities for pecuniary speculation. But I think you are mistaken when you imagine that suffering is the necssary fate of all preachers. I am perfectly confident that comparatively few really suffer for the necessaries of life. I will not deny that some of them appear to have a hard time. There are some, I have no doubt, who have honestly mistaken their calling. They are good and sincere men, governed by pure motives, but they are self-deceived as to their vocation. They have no call to the ministry except their own strong desire to benefit their fellow-men and their belief that they can do good in the world. Consequently, they are pitiable failures in the ministry, and suffer just such consequences as would befall them in the pursuit of some other calling. They would be failures as lawyers or physicians, and consequently as preachers. I think that view explains the origin of the misfortunes that come upon them in the management of their secular affairs. They are deficient in executive ability. So I think it is not exactly fair to say that the church allows all her ministers to suffer, when the misfortunes of quite a number of them can be traced to their own want of energy. Elminating that class, it will be found that ministers fare about as well as

do men in other professions. After all, what other profession offers a man a living salary the very first year he engages in business? The lawyer more frequently than otherwise is compelled to wait many years before he can gain anything like a livelihood, and some live and die in poverty. But you never hear people pity the lawyers. Take them as a class, and are they really any more prosperous than preachers? Large numbers of them never succeed, and in fact are in more distressing straits than the poorest preachers of any denomination. The same thing is true of physicians. It often requires many years to build up a practice that affords a decent living. On the other hand, it is generally the case that the preacher is assured a respectable living the very first year he enters upon his career. The members of his congregation are too loyal and charitable to see him suffer for food and clothing, and they frequently send him provisions and raiment. You know how they often 'pound' him till his larder is full to overflowing. I have never heard of a minister straving or freezing or even suffering to any great extent unless he were ignorant of the commonest laws of domestic economy. Then when the preacher is disabled by the infirmities of age, and can no longer perform ministerial duties, there is a Board of Relief, I believe, in every denomination that af-

fords him sufficient assistance to prevent any pinching want. Now what other profession makes such provisions? But even granting the existence of the hardships, about which there is so much unnecessary talk, preachers generally are the happiest class of men—and happiness, you know, is the chief object of pursuit, and men are everywhere striving for it. It is their ultimate aim, no matter how busily employed. Did you ever see a miserable minister—one weighed down with that despondency which drives so many poor wretches to the commission of suicide. Amid all their cares and hard labors they are sustained by a lively, thrilling hope of future glory and felicity which is a compensation for all the trials to which they are exposed. There is no phase of worldly happiness that will compare with it."

"Why, Bernie, I declare you describe the preacher's life in such glowing colors that you make me think the profession can compete with any other simply as a means of passing away one's mortal existence. If I had any notion at all of adopting it. you would remove all my vacillation." "I not only hope to see you a preacher, but a foreign missionary as it is my intention to be."

"You don't tell me so!" cried Mark throwing up his hands in undisguised amazement.

"Surely you are only joking."

"Why should I not be in earnest?"

"Because that is carrying self-denial a little too far. It is self-sacrifice enough to be a preacher in one's own country and among one's own people. But to give up the delights of our glorious civilization for the horrors of heathen barbarism—oh, Bernie, I could not expect it of you."

"Again I have to combat your erroneous notions. There is much foolish talk about that, too. Say what you please about horrors and all sort of thing, but this foreign work ought to be attractive to any young man, when he considers its advantages from even a secular point of view. The foreign missionary, from all I can learn, has an easier time than the home missionary. Just consider the opportunities he has for enlarging his mind. Then he receives a salary sufficient to prevent any serious want. It is not, by any means all toil, hardship and suffering."

"Stop, Bernie," exclaimed Mark with a laugh, "say no more about it now. I do not wish to hear any more I will talk to you about it, when I begin to debate with myself the question of adopting the ministry—and I am far from that at present."

"You may think so at this moment," said Bernard with deep solemnity," but the prophecy is not impossible of accomplishment that you will yet preach the

blessed gospel and in a foreign land, too. Stranger things than that have happened."

"Bernie, I promise you that if I am ever convinced that such is my duty I shall not hesitate."

"I believe you, my dear friend. So for the present we will drop this subject."

CHAPTER II.

Disinherited.

SIX weeks after the conversation detailed in the preceding chapter, the two young friends separated sorrowfully, and returned to their respective homes in order to prepare for their chosen vocation. Bernard Graham lived in the town of Columbus, Miss., under the protection of the parental roof. He was at that time in his twenty-second year. He was graduated from the University with high and richly merited honors as was his classmate. Mark Comerson. In fact, the Faculty divided the first honor, as it was called, between the two. Bernard was expecting soon to enter a theological seminary to fit himself for the duties of the foreign missionary work. It was some days before he ventured to acquaint his father with his intention, dreading the storm of passion which, he had good reason to believe, the intelligence would occasion. He was too well acquainted with his parent not to surmise that the mention of his purpose would awaken the most violent opposition. Colonel Graham—so dubbed not by reason of ever having held military office, but on

account of his possession of a large amount of the world's goods—was a man of social influence in the community where he lived. He commanded respect by reason of his education, wealth and personal traits of character. He belonged to that class of men who inspire people with a certain kind of indescribable awe by their self-assertion in connection with positiveness, firmness and obstinate decision. People were afraid of him, so to speak, by reason of these qualities resting upon a basis of personal courage that caused ordinary men to beware of giving him offense. If he had only been a zealous christian he would have been a potential factor for righteousness within the circle of his influence. But he was devoted to what may be called in these modern days, scientific infidelity. He was not an atheist in the sense in which the word was used centuries ago. 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.' Col. Graham was not an atheist in the sense in which the sacred penman understood his own declaration. Ages ago the atheist believed that the sublunary world was governed by chance, necessity, or fate to which no clear, intelligent meaning was attached. But really, it may be affirmed without hazard, no man ever was an atheist, pure and simple. We do not mean to assert that every unbeliever is dishonest with himself and actually and truly believes in God whose

existence he denies. To make our meaning clear it will be necessary to allude to a psychological fact which seems to have been unobserved, or at least not insisted upon till comparatively recent times. The fact, to which we refer is the triple character of human existence; in different words we lead three lives in this world, or one life in three different aspects. The first is the life which comes under the observation of our fellow-man. They take cognigance of our outward—our corporeal conduct, while they are ignorant of the esoteric motives from which it originates. They have no knowledge of our thoughts, except insofar as they can be conjectured from the relation between intellectual operations and overt activities. The second life is the totally internal—in our consciousness. Our thoughts and motives are known only to ourselves. No mind reader and no judge of human nature can penetrate, to any great extent, into this hidden field of reflection, meditation and imagination. This is the life that constitutes our individuality—the broad chasm that isolates us from our fellow-beings. To them we could not reveal all the thoughts that pass through our minds, if we desired.

But back of all this—deep down under it there is the third life, mysterious, impenetrable. It is disclosed only partially to ourselves. It is what mental

philosophers call sub-consciousness, and is known fully only to God. It is the dark region of our impulses. We are not aware of its nature till circumstances over which we have no control suddenly arise and disclose our real characters to ourselves. Perhaps, an illustration will be of advantage to the younger portion of our readers whose attention may never have been called to this subject: An atheist was once crossing the ocean, and was boastingly discoursing to his fellow-passengers upon his iniquitous principles. While he was thus engaged there was a terrific explosion of one of the steamer's boilers, and it seemed that the vessel must sink in a few moments. The infidel in terror and despair fell upon his knees and prayed God to spare his life. Thus his sub-consciousness revealed to him his real belief. So while Col. Graham emphatically disavowed belief in the personality of the omnipotent God, there is no doubt that in his sub-consciousness he was as orthodox as Paul himself. On the streets of Columbus he proclaimed his religious principles with enthusiasm worthy of a better cause. He was so over-bearing and dictatorial that few of his fellow-citizens cared to engage in discussion with him. And yet, he was not totally devoid of all desirable traits and noble impulses. In his domestic relations he was almost a model, and loved his wife and three chil-

dren with a fervor and devotion that aroused the wonder of his acquaintances. It was marvelous to them how such a raving unbeliever could be so kind and charitable, for he never turned away from his door unrelieved, any worthy beggar. But Ahab, of Scriptural fame, was not totally bad at heart and yet, he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than did all the kings before him.

It may, therefore be surmised that Bernard was in no great haste to acquaint his father with his intentions. But the father himself made the opportunity which Bernard desired and also dreaded; for a few days after his son's return home one morning he suddenly opened conversation:

"Well, Bernie," he said kindly and proudly "I suppose you intend to enter the law school next term. I have been talking to Judge Orr about you, and I think after you get your diploma you might enter into partnership with him, and that would be the very thing for you."

"Father," answered Bernard in evident embarrassment, "I have been wanting to talk with you on this subject, but before I utter a word you must promise me that you will not lose your temper. If you cannot converse quietly and reasonably we would better dismiss the subject."

"Why, my boy," answered the father laughing,

"you look as solemn and talk as deprecatingly as though you wanted me to set you up in the saloon business."

"Will you promise, father, to listen to me without anger?"

"Yes, Bernie, I give you my word that I will control myself, no matter what you may say," replied the Colonel after a brief pause.

"Then, father, I have no intention of studying law."

"I am sorry to hear you say so, my son, I have never had any other idea than you would be a distinguished lawyer like my old friend, Roger Barton, of Holly Springs—one of the finest in the state. With your college education and your oratorical powers you ought to equal him. I love you too much, my boy, to flatter you, but I do say with candor and pride that I have the utmost confidence in your ability to rise high in the legal profession, and it is a sore disappointment to have my hopes suddenly dashed to the ground. But I ought to be wiser than to try to force you to adopt a vocation that you do not like. What then, do you intend to follow? Do you wish to be a professor in a college?"

"No father."

"Do you want to engage in commerce? If that is your choice I will set you up in business."

"No father," answered the son skrinking and hesitating, for he anticipated a furious storm notwithstanding the promise.

"Well, then, do you want to be a farmer? If so you can begin at once. I will start you at it on a section of land."

"No father."

"What, thten, in heaven's name do you want, Surely, you do not want to be a preacher?" he continued laughing.

"Oh, father," he said with undisguised emotion, "you cannot imagine how much I dislike to pain your feelings, but the truth must be told, and after full consideration, I have decided to be a preacher."

The father in spite of his promise to restrain his feelings started from his seat as if a bomb-shell had exploded at his feet, and an angry flush passed over his face. "Father," cried the son beseechingly, "hear me calmly before you yield to angry passion. Let us reason about it. You are one of the most sensible men, I ever knew, and I have the utmost confidence in your judgment." "You have chosen a wretched way to show it," answered the Colonel in a more tranquil tone than Bernard expected. "You could not offer me a greater insult. I have never

concealed from you my opinions of preachers, and I repeat what I have often affirmed, and they are a set of the most consummate hypocrites that ever prayed upon human society. I have inexpressible contempt for men who gain their subsistence by dealing out unmitigated nonsense to the deluded, gullible people who pay them for their miserable prayers and jesuitical sermons. I have more respect for burglars, who at least have courage to defy the law and make fight for the means of existence, but these preachers" —turning up his nose sneeringly—"disguised as wolves in sheep's clothing— take refuge under a priestly garb that protects their poltroonery—cringing curs, meekly sneaking into their holy pulpits with smooth dissimulation skilled to grace, a devil's purpose with an angel's face—working their minds into a fury of assumed ecstasy over a long tissue of lies which they pretended to revere as supernatural—oh, it arouses in me disgust too deep for utterance. And now you have the audacity to tell me to my face that you intend to join this precious pack of mystic hypocrites. It is too much."

"Father," spoke Bernard in a subdued tone and with tears gathering in his eyes, "did you not promise me just now that you would control your temper?"

"I did," he answered cooling down somewhat, and partially relieved by the delivery of his tirade of

effervescing malediction, "but you shocked me so that I forgot myself." "But honestly, Bernie," he continued recovering his equanimity, "I don't see how a sensible boy as I have always regarded you, can believe such rubbish as you will have to preach. How can you make up your mind to be a hypocrite. Surely you don't believe such foolish doctrines as the church will bind you to proclaim?"

"To what doctrine do you allude, father?"

"O, the whole thing—the whole bible as it is called. It is merely a book of amusing fables—some of them not as good as those of Esop."

"Father," manifesting respect for his parent, "Will you allow me to ask you a few questions?"

"Yes, go on, and I will answer."

"Well, I want to ask one or two questions about the four gospels. They profess to relate facts, but you call them fables. Were they not offered to the world as truthful histories, and not mere fictions or fables?"

"You may suppose so, if you will—it makes no difference. The authors knew they were lies—couldn't help but know it."

"You are a man of quite extensive information, can you name any historian who offered to the world a book as true history that contained only lies or fables. Does not every historian believe that he is

relating facts? What could he possibly gain by writing what he knows to be lies? He certainly must know that his history would not be received as authentic. If Esop had offered his fables as incidents that actually occurred, everybody would laugh at his folly, and no one could accept his book as true. Every historian writes what he conceives to be facts, or he could have no hope that his history would ever find its way to peoples' libraries. His labor would all be in vain. What possible motive could have influenced Luke or John to record a tissue of falsehoods that would expose him to contempt and persecution? What could he gain by representing that Christ had risen from the dead, if it were not so? Who could be imposed on by such a statement that could so easily be disproved if it were not true. If Jesus never emerged from the sepulchre, he was no more than any other dead Jew. He was only a self-deceived fanatic, and could, by no possibility be of any use to his followers. Now, why, I ask you should John take his life in his hands to defend the memory of a man who had so deceived him? No, no, father, you can hardly deny that the writers of the Gospels were honest men. They believed, as everything goes to prove, that they were publishing facts. What will you do with such witnesses as these? Will you trample plain, historical facts under foot or

brush them aside as mere cobwebs? Do you really believe that these writers were bad men, whose purpose was to impose upon mankind the most stupendous fraud ever conceived by a human brain?"

Col. Graham perceived the force of his sons argument, and had to admit it. He also felt a secret pride that his boy was such a shrewd logician.

"I do not say they were such bad men, Bernie, but whether they were or not, they ask us to believe ridiculous absurdities similar to those of Munchausen, and far more amazing. Why, even Esop never penned a fable as silly as some of the tales of the Bible. For instance, who can believe that a poor, weak-minded man fed four or five thousand hungry people to absolute satiety with a loaf or two of bread and a couple of trout. Pshaw! it sounds like the tales in the children's primers. How you or any other sensible person can accept such stuff surpasses my comprehension."

"But, father, you have studied law and you know how to reason on facts. Now, what will you do with the historic evidence that supports the statement? You cannot just arbitrarily throw aside all human testimony. You certainly ought to accord it the respect that you allow profane history."

"What kind of testimony are you talking about, Bernie?"

"Well, the Scriptural writer relates the story of Jesus in a plain straight-forward manner just as if he were recording some common event universally admitted and as tho' he never expected it to be disputed. Then the marvelous fact he relates is vouched for by a number of creditable eye witnesses. Then subsequent circumstances show the miraculous life of Christ was believed by thousands of people who, no doubt, fully investigated the matter. They had ample opportunities to disprove the story of the New Testament if it were false. But so far from rejecting they accepted it as indubitable truth, and sealed their testimony with their hearts' blood." Col. Graham could not reply to the argument, and he could only resort to bluster.

"Bernie, you are deceiving yourself with sophistry. I have heard such arguments as yours long ago, and they make no impression on my mind. After full investigation I regard the whole Bible as a string of falsehoods unworthy of credence."

Bernard saw that no argument, however strong, would convince his father, whose lack of sincerity he perceived with deep sorrow, and he answered:

"But, father, I believe the Bible with all my heart, soul and strength, and since my faith cannot harm you nor any one else I do not think you ought to try to persuade me to abandon it." "Boy, you don't

know what you are saying; but that is neither here nor there; are you determined immovably to forego all that I offer you and devote your life to a profession that I abominate and detest?"

"Father," answered the son with tears welling up, "I must obey the call of Christ, or I shall be utterly miserable. I have heard the wailing cry of heathen nations, and it is impossible to resist it."

"Really, have you decided to go to foreign lands to preach?"

"Yes, father, that is my intention."

"Worse and worse" replied the parent with all the sneering contempt he could throw into his articulation. "To act the priest in your own country is bad enough, but to give up your home, friends and prospects for the sake of black or yellow rascals out of whom you can make nothing but hypocrites—well, that just caps the climax. See here, boy, if you do it, I shall disinherit you. You shall never have a cent of my money to invest in ecclesiastical projects. I shall divide it between your brother and sister."

"That is my wish, father. I care not to be encumbered with money."

This answer was so unexpected that the Colonel almost regretted that he had announced his intention so ungraciously. It tended to restore his equanimity and he said in a kinder tone:

"Bernie, I do hope you will reconsider this determination. Say no more about it now. Take further time for reflection." He rose in ill humor and left his seat. Bernard went to his room without having replied to the parental request, and prayed.

That night his mother entered his chamber and found him reading his Bible. He affectionately seated her, but he did not fail to observe the traces of tears on her cheek. "My dear son," she said with quivering voice, "your father has told me something that has filled me with the deepest grief, and I have been crying all day about it. You have pained the feelings of both of us—oh, I cannot tell you how profoundly. We had set our hearts on starting you in some brilliant career that would be an honor to the family, and you have brought such bitter disappointment to us. Can't you reconsider this notion of yours to preach?"

"My dear mother: I am so sorry that you and father take this view of the matter. I had expected nothing less than father's opposition, but I did not think that you were so deeply tinctured with his religious principles that you would ask me to do violence to my conscience and trample what I conceive to be my duty under foot—and that, too, for the sake of secular advantages, I suppose, dear mother, you

will not altogether disbelieve me when I tell you that the call of Christ has fallen on my ears and penetrated to the very core of my heart. If I disobey it, there can be no possible happiness to me in this world. The combined wealth of all the millionaires of earth have not the weight of a feather against my conception of duty. If I turn my back upon my convictions, I could never find another moment's peace. Surely, mother, you would not want me to follow some other profession when every hour of my existence would be embittered by the consciousness of God's displeasure resting upon me."

"These are the idle fancies of inexperienced youth. If I sincerely believed in miracles I might sympathize with you. But I have attended revival meetings, as people call them and witnessed the rantings of over-zealous preachers and have laughed at their efforts to inspire people with the very sentiments that have somehow secured a deep hold on you."

"Oh, mother, you cannot imagine what pain you inflict upon me by making sport of what I regard as supernatural and holy. I do not approve of all the machinery that is sometimes resorted to in the kind of meetings to which you allude. There is no doubt that some misguided preachers have mistaken perspiration for inspiration—if I might be allowed to use so vulgar a metaphor—and have thereby brought re-

ligion into disrepute. I, by no means, endorse their rantings, as you call them, and if I thought you referred only to these, I could overlook your sneers. But if you mean to include all ministers and their honest endeavors to benefit their fellow-beings, then nothing you could do or say would cause me more pain than to hear you hold them up to ridicule and contempt."

"Forgive me, son. I did not mean to wound your feelings. But you are so young and inexperienced that I fear you are carried away by mere fancies. I have seen so many young people go to the mourner's bench, as they call it, rise up and shout and commit the wildest extravagances and a few weeks afterward laugh at their own follies. I am afraid that you are laboring under some such hallucination."

"Dear mother, let us not talk more on the subject. What you have said—while some of it is true—does not affect the character of true religion. I am satisfied with my faith, and nothing you can say, or father either, can shake it."

"Son, my feelings are very much mixed and I can't help it; I am provoked, I am disappointed and I am grieved. You can't imagine what a disappointment it is to us. Just to think that you are going to be a preacher! If it were anything else I could stand it. You need not shake your head so. I am

no atheist. I believe there is a God, and in that I differ from your father; but I do not believe He calls every man to preach that is now at it."

"Neither do I, mother, so far as that is concerned. Some are honestly mistaken." "And that is what I fear in your case. You are too young to decide at once. You have plenty of time; don't be hasty. I entreat you, wait awhile and see if a change does not come over your feelings."

"The cry of the heathen is ringing in my ears. Do not ask me, mother to procrastinate. I want to enter upon the work as soon as I possibly can."

Nothing more was said upon the subject, and Bernard remained quietly at home for more than two months.

CHAPTER III.

Hydrophobia and Love.

ON some bright day, cast a pebble into a quietly sleeping, smooth-surfaced lake, and you will observe that a little wavelet is awakened. It increases the dimension of length in circular form—or rather the circle enlarges till it is commensurate with the boundaries of the lake, provided it meets with no obstruction. This is an old and homely metaphor, but it is no inappropriate illustration of human life. A little, seemingly insignificant event sometimes changes the whole aspect of one's career. Indeed, the very greatest events hinge upon the very smallest things. Mohammedanism, that numbers its adherents by millions, can trace its origin to such a triviality as a spider's web. If a certain spider, long since dead and gone, had not been ravenously hungry—judging by the rapidity with which he worked—and frantically spread his ingenious trap across the mouth of a certain cave, the distinguished prophets' startling career would have been cut short, and in all likelihood the world would never more have heard of him, and the Koran would never have been honored with preservation thro' the instru-

mentality of printer's ink. Had not a certain goose been instinctively warned of the approach of a foe and instantly set up a loud, piercing cackling which very quickly aroused the slumbering inhabitants, history states that Rome would have suffered inglorious destruction. It would have been in keeping with the character of the noble old Romans if they had deified that same beneficent goose! The probability is that every battle owes its victory of one party and its consequent defeat of the other to the conduct of some one man. He may be only an humble private in the ranks, but he strikes down one individual enemy opposite to him, and the fall of that enemy disheartens or demoralizes his comrade next to him, which discouragement communicates itself to the next man, and then, that to the next and so on till the whole army catches the infection and takes to shameless flight; and thus often an apparently senseless panic ensues. Thus Arnold Winklereid, whom the poet has immortalized, by his glorious death gained a grand victory, which, but for his noble self-sacrifice might have been defeat. So it is in all the affairs of life.

The foregoing—perhaps unnecessary—moralization is preliminary to the attention which Mark Comerson now demands in the progress of this story. He had told his friend Bernard Graham that he in-

tended to be a lawyer. For the execution of this purpose, he had settled after his graduation, in the little city of Holly Springs, Mississippi, where he had been born and reared. For some reason he was not a "success" in the practice of the law, and was a disagreeable surprise and disappointment to his many friends. As has been stated he possessed a brilliant mind, but he did not seem to "fit into his profession" as some of his friends expressed it. Yet he took it easy and did not worry himself over his enforced idleness. He spent a considerable portion of his leisure time in the pursuit of small game in the forests adjoining the town, and was a dear lover of this Nimrodical kind of sport. Everybody liked him on account of his vivacious, cheerful disposition, notwithstanding his devotion to the delights of indolence.

In the declining portion of one bright afternoon, Mark was returning home, gun in hand, when one of those small incidents—which caused the rambling observations of the first part of the present chapter—unexpectedly occurred. As he was passing the suburbs of the town he was startled by a loud, piercing shriek, a hundred yards or less in front of him. He was moving slowly along, with his eyes upon the ground—a manner characteristic of weariness. Quickly looking up, he perceived a girl—or

young lady in the grasp of a dog afflicted with hydrophobia. Of course, he quickened his pace to a rapid run till he approached within a few steps of the spot where the tragedy was enacting. Fortunately the fierce animal held his victim only by the skirt of her apparel, and was tugging away with all his might. Mark enjoyed the reputation of being an expert in shooting, and raising his gun and taking careful aim so as not to endanger the girls' life, fired. Of course, it was somewhat a risk, but it seemed there was no other practicable way of rescuing the victim. The enraged brute dropped dead in his tracks.

"Has he hurt you?" inquired Mark as he approached near enough to inspect the lady's dress.

"Only torn my skirt, I believe," she replied with a composure that surprised her heroic rescuer, for at first he feared that, like a great many of the feminine sex, she would fall in a swoon under such tragical circumstances. She looked at him with a smile on her face somewhat pallid from unusual excitement.

"Why, bless my soul! if it is not Cicely Bradford!" he exclaimed as he gazed more narrowly at the features of the girl who, we may as well here state, presented to his view a charming type of beauty. Of course, the reader expects such a state-

ment in the pages of a story, but, without exaggeration, her beauty may be described by the one word, radiant. Mark made no effort to conceal his admiration of her enchanting personality.

"But, pardon my impudence," he continued. "I should have said Miss Cicely. The last time I remember seeing you, you were a little tot nine or ten years of age, and now you are almost, if not quite a grown woman."

"And you are Mr. Mark Comerson, I remember very distinctly, as tho' it were but yesterday, when we played together at the old schoolhouse like little children as we really were; and now playfully mocking his tone and manner, "you are almost, if not quite a grown man." And both gave way to unrestrained risibility.

"But," continued Cicely, "don't call me Miss, please; that sounds too formal for old acquaintances, tho' in fact we are not very well acquainted after all."

"It is remarkable, Cicely—if you will allow me the privilege of pretermitting the customary prefix —that we have been living here all our lives, and have not spoken to each other for the last ten years."

"Whose fault is it?" she asked archly.

"Mine, I candidly acknowledge. But there is some excuse for both of us. You have been away from

home at school until recently, and so have I. This is the first time I have met you *vis-a-vis* since I came back to my native place to live—or rather starve—" he added with a laugh.

"Why," she replied not participating in his merriment, "you are a flourishing lawyer, at least so says that black sign with the brass letters on it over your office door. So, Mr. ———" hesitating.

"Call me Mark, if you please. Tit for tat."

"Very well, I am glad to call you Mark, just as I used to do at school; and that sounds like old friends; only I must Mister you in public, you know. I could not exactly afford to drop the prefix—pretermit the prefix, as you say—in company: that would arouse unjust suspicion." "You are making fun of me when you call me a flourishing lawyer, and you misrepresent my sign, for it makes no such statement as you mention. The truth is I am idling away my time here, marching nearly every day thro' the woods in search of squirrels instead of briefs." "But suppose you had not idled to-day, as you say, what would have become of my humble self? Like a gallant knight errant of old, you came rushing up armed *cap-a-pie* at a very opportune moment, and no doubt saved my life. Wouldn't it have been horrible to have been bitten to death by that horrid, savage beast?"

"It makes me shudder to think about it," said Mark looking at her symmetrical form with serious thoughtfulness. "I am truly trankful that I came upon the grusome scene in time to be of some little service."

"Little service! If you hadn't come in the nick of time I expect I would have been torn into fragments. O, Mark, I can't find words to express my gratitude."

"Don't mention it, please. After all, what I did was nothing. I had only to raise my gun and fire."

"Yes, but you did it so skilfully. Was there not some danger of shooting me as well as the dog?"

"No, none of any consequence. You see I have brought down so many birds on the wing that they call me an expert. Without the least boasting, I could have stood off ten paces further and killed that vicious cur without putting your limbs in jeopardy."

"But isn't it tragically romantic? It very strongly reminds me of incidents I have read and shivered over in the story books—about helpless damsels in the clutches of a dragon or some other hideous monster and the chivalrous knight all clad in steel, with a long javelin—prancing up on his bucephalus and slaying the thing. Of course you, have read the stories of Ariadue, Perseus and all the rest of them?"

"But," said Mark with a laugh, "you do not mention the most interesting part."

"What is that?"

"Snatching the fainting damsel out of the monster's molars, carrying her off to her father's magnificent castle and spoiling all the romance by marrying her."

"How did that spoil it, Mark?" she asked with a merry twinkle.

"Why, suppose it had been his wife whom the dragon seized, don't you believe he would or might have acted as did Lord Nelson on a certain occasion when his ship was engaged in a hot battle?"

"I'm not so well versed in history as to be able to answer. How was it?"

"Well, Nelson was blind in one eye, and while the fight was raging, he was told that the signal to retreat was hoisted from the flag-ship. Snatching up a telescope he put it to his blind eye and said, 'where, I don't see it,' and then went on with the battle."

"And what is the application?"

"Well, when the knight should come up in obedience to the screaming summons, is it not possible that he might close his eyes and say 'I don't see her,' and allow the brute to finish the tragedy, and thus rid himself of an uncongenial companion?"

"Shame on you, Mark," she cried with a laugh "to so grossly slander those valiant gentleman. But

don't you think that women, too, tire of their uncompanionable husbands?"

"I think most of them have good reason to do so, for they are very far from being brilliant and gallant knights errant. I, like yourself, was once fascinated by the thrilling histories of their amazing exploits. But when I read about the ludicrous feats of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza I lost all respect for those wonderful heroes frantically rushing up and down the country in quest of adventures." "But it was romantic all the same—and life is so dull and monotonous unless it is occasionally variegated with some uncommon events to disturb the hum-drum existence of every-day toil."

"It is romantic to read about when one has nothing to do but kill time. But you have just had a taste of romance, as you call it, did you find any particular pleasure in it?" "Why, yes; I found excitement in it and it afforded me the highest kind of pleasure to be rescued by so handsome a knight, and I have no doubt you enjoyed slaying the dragon and freeing the frightened damsel." "And there it all ends" said Mark smiling "for I am not going to run away with you and carry you off to my castle. So, the denouement to this romantic adventure is common enough, for we ought to be trudging along to your home, so that you can repair that unromantic rent

in your skirt, instead of standing here laughing and talking like two simple-minded children." "I have enjoyed it, Mark."

"And so have I, Cicely."

They turned and walked to her home, still engaging in lively conversation, and as he was finally taking his leave, he said: "Since we have renewed our acquaintance, I would be delighted if you would allow me to call at least semi-occasionally."

"Nothing would afford me more pleasure, Mark, I have been home from school only a few weeks, and I am really having a dull time of it. There is so little in this quiet old town to interest one. You have been too polite to ask me what I was doing so far from home all alone. The truth is I became so lonesome that I was taking a long walk in order to kill time. So, I shall be glad to see you whenever it may please you to call."

Mark, as he was slowly making his way homeward, could not but think of this beautiful girl to whom he had rendered such timely assistance. Cicely was now nineteen years of age, and had just been graduated from one of the best schools in New York. Her father owned three or four plantations a few miles from town and one on the Mississippi River and his estates were estimated at a million or more. But notwithstanding her brilliant prospects and her

dazzling beauty of person, she was a sensible girl and was not at all inflated with vanity or pride at the thought that she was a wealthy heiress. Mark in his room was thinking what happiness it would be to own a home of his own adorned by the permanent presence of so noble and charming a woman. But alas, and alas, how unjust was fate to interpose between them a dark and deep chasm that could never be crossed. His father was a poor man—and very poor in comparison with Major Bradford. Mark possessed nothing but his education and his profession, neither one of which, down to that period of his history had improved the state of his exchequer. The thought was revolting to his pride of asking such a one as Cicely to abandon the luxuries of the elegant home to which she was accustomed, and share the abject hardships of such a wretched abode as he could furnish, and the thought of living at her expense, if he had entertained it, would have caused him to blush with shame. Many a young man would have eagerly jumped at the chance of sharing Cicely's fortune, even without the prospect of any other happiness than that which money could procure, but Mark would have forfeited his own self-respect could he have admitted such an ignoble thought into his mind. He did not feel that he was "dead in love"—a phrase in vogue among young people. But he could

not blind himself to the possibility of his reaching a condition of heart that would prove destructive to his peace of mind, if he should encourage himself to cultivate the sentiment that was threatening to invade the domain of his affections. He seriously debated with himself the question whether he should avail himself of the privilege of paying social visits. He clearly foresaw the danger to which he was about to expose himself, but he had asked her permission to call. Would he not lose her respect if he should be so disloyal to all—the most common rules of etiquette—as to ignore his own request? The lonely soliloquy ended in his determination to call at least once, and then he would be free to terminate all social intercourse.

Accordingly he appeared at the Bradford mansion a few evenings afterward, and was received by Cicely with a warmth that was flattering to what little vanity he had in his nature. It is needless to say that she proved more interesting and attractive than on the occasion of their first meeting. He did not try to penetrate her feelings towards himself as most young men would have done. What did it matter whether she reciprocated his sentiment or not? The affair must come to an end in their ultimate separation. If she returned his affection then it would be the fate of two hearts to wrestle with dis-

appointment. It would be best for both of them if they should meet no more, except as bare acquaintances. In accord with this self-counsel suggested by the dictates of common sense, he did not repeat his visit, as it was impossible for him to deny the fact that he was falling in love with her deeply and desperately. He would nip his feeling of tenderness in its very inception. He had not the vanity to believe that Cicely would suffer the least inconvenience from his absence, even if she should do him the honor to think of it at all. Day after day rolled by till weeks had elapsed. Mark was beginning to feel that he would finally recover his cardiacal equilibrium, when one day—as fate would have it—he met Cicely face to face on the street. No other person was in sight, and she looked at him sadly, as he thought, and said: "Why have you not been to see me?"

Mark had no time for reflection, and his answer rushed impulsively from his subconsciousness: "I will call this evening, and explain." She seemed satisfied and passed on without another word. That night the two met again in the elegant parlor, "I suppose," said Cicely after the exchange of ordinary civilities, "you have been quite busy with your law cases."

"My law cases," replied Mark with a laugh, "could all be settled in a space of time brief enough to be ridiculous."

"Mark," she said with amusement sparkling in her blue eyes, "do you know that people say you have mistaken your calling?"

"No, I did not; but what vocation are they so kind as to select for me?"

"They say you ought to be a preacher?"

"What put that into their erudite cranium?"

"Because, they say you are so good and moral and generally solemn."

"What is your opinion of preachers yourself?"

"Oh, I have the utmost respect for them, and I really think it is the highest, noblest calling on earth."

"If you think that why do you not marry a preacher? You could easily get the best in the church, without any maneuvering that would be the least repugnant to your modesty."

"Oh, that sort of life would never suit me. I would have to give up my dancing and other foolishness to which I am addicted. I am not good enough for such a position." The two talked on this and other subjects till it was almost time to end the interview and then Cicely said:

"You have not explained why you have so persistently avoided me the past month. What have I done to deserve such treatment?"

"Cicely," he replied in a sorrowful tone, "I re-

gret that any explanation is necessary; but I trust you will excuse and appreciate my candor and pardon my impudent presumption; but the truth in plain language is I have been making a fool of myself."

"How, Mark?" she asked in surprise at his solemn self-denunciation.

"Why, I was about to allow myself to fall desperately in love with you. But I fortunately saw the folly of it the first time I called. What was the use to bestow my love upon a girl whom I could never dare to ask to share my poverty and obscurity. A gulf as wide as that which separated Dives from Lazarus expands between us; there is no crossing it; there is no bridge. Please understand me before you say anything, and I do not ask you to utter a word in the way of response. I have not come here to-night to arouse your sympathy nor to ask in what estimation you hold me. It was revolting to my sense of manliness to try to win your love when as I clearly perceived, it would all end in disappointment if our affection were mutual. It would not be fair and just on my part to call regularly or frequently because I might discourage some suitor for your hand, whose addresses you could consider. So, I concluded I would better not visit you at all, and for that reason I have kept away. I hope you

may be happy with some man who is in your sphere. I realize fully, Cicely," he continued with a sad smile, "that I am a trifling, no account sort of fellow, and never will be anything else. I can never ask a woman to share my lot, and I have too much pride ever to solicit the hand of an heiress. That would be a forfeiture of my self-respect. I shall not say that I madly love you now, and I do not ask you to give the least indication of your sentiment toward me, either by word or look. Just say nothing and let me depart believing that I have not utterly lost your respect and friendship on account of this foolish explanation I have made. I would not have made it, but I wanted us to part on amicable terms. In the future we can meet without embarrassment to either." Cicely listened with an air of perplexity and distress at this long apology.

"Mark," she answered with composure, "I am surprised to hear you talk in this manner. I had no idea you thought of me in that way. I thought surely we could be friends like brother and sister. There is no suitor for my hand—I tell you honestly—and I don't know there ever will be. But even if there were, I don't see why you could not be as a brother to me. Why cannot boys and girls associate together without this foolish falling in love? I knew you when we both were younger than we now

are, and I have always admired your kindly, self-sacrificing disposition and all your other noble qualities. Everybody speaks well of you, and you are very popular in spite of your unnecessary self-depreciation. I thought I had found in you a good friend who could spare a few hours a week to help an idle lonesome girl to kill time. Don't you believe we could meet and talk as two good friends without any of this loving, flirting, and courting? Let us leave all that off, Mark, and continue to be friends. If you love me as you say—and I believe you—I will help you to stop it."

At this Mark burst into a sincere laugh in which she joined—tho' she did not know the cause of his merriment—and they both sat laughing like too children.

"Cicely," he said, wiping the evidences of mirth from his eyes, "You are the most remarkable girl I have ever seen. You are beginning already to cure me of my folly. Be it as you say, and let us continue to be friends. I have hopes that you will entirely heal this youthful infirmity of mine, tho' I cannot imagine how you will proceed."

"My first prescription is that you must not intentionally avoid me, as you have been doing for weeks past. You may rest assured that I shall not try to aggravate your malady. We will never talk

about love, unless it is to make sport of it. Regard me as your sister and treat me as such."

"All right, Cicely, if you will take the risk of driving me into insanity. I will call again soon."

And they parted in good humor. Suffice it to say that Mark kept his promise. Among other places he accompanied her to the various churches on Sunday nights.

CHAPTER IV.

Off to China.

SINCE the unpleasant interview with his parents, recorded in a previous chapter, nothing more had been said upon the all-important subject that filled the whole horizon of Bernard Graham's life. But the time had now come, when he must take his departure from home in order to enter the theological seminary. The day before he was to leave he was packing his trunk, and was assisted by his mother.

"My dear boy," she said while folding some of his wearing apparel, "you cannot imagine how it pains my heart to let you leave us for such a purpose as you are entertaining. If you must give your life to this business of preaching I could bear it with more resignation if you remained in your own country so that I could see you occasionally. But to cross the ocean to live in ——— but you have never told me where you were going."

"My heart inclines me to China, mother, and if our Committee consents to it, I shall do my work there."

"Yes, go to that wretched heathen country, which is our antipodes, where I can never see you again." Tears fell from her eyes.

"Mama," spoke up Bernard's ten-year-old brother, Tom, who was idly looking on at the preparations they were making, "let me go to China with Bernie. I think it would be so jolly to live among the pig-tails. Let me go."

"Yes, you would cry to come back before you crossed half over the ocean."

"You better believe I wouldn't. I don't see why you should cry so about Bernie's goin'. He'll have a high old time over there, but you're cryin' as if you were a goin' to Bernie's funeral. Don't go on so, mama. He can come back home if he don't like it. I'm sure I would enjoy lookin' at the pig-tails. They're a funny people, and I heard a man say the other day he didn't believe they had any souls, and he thought Bernie was doin' a silly thing to try to save them. After he tries it awhile he may get tired of the job and come back."

"No, Tommie, he will not return soon, and we might as well be burying him. It is almost the same thing. And all for what? Why, to preach to a few old Chinese who have scarcely any souls, if they have any at all—as you say, Tommie."

"No, I didn't say it, mama. The man said it, and he was a smart man, too."

"If they have any soul," said the mother, "it is a mighty small one."

"Bernie," spoke the father who entered the room at this moment and had heard his wife's last remark, "I tell you, I wouldn't give that" snapping his fingers, "for all the Chinese you will convert. Steeped as they are, in the most degrading superstition, which permeates their whole being because it is instilled into their narrow minds from their childhood, I honestly believe you can never lift one of them out of it. You are simply wasting your time and money."

"Father, I candidly confess it is hard and slow work. We do not expect to accomplish any very astounding results among the older people—and yet our progress is gratifying and encouraging. It is a fact, sometimes surprising to the missionaries themselves that so many thousands have changed their superstitious belief and taken hold of the Christian religion." "That is, they say so, Bernie."

"It is, no doubt, true that they do not fully understand it, but they will gradually learn. But our chief hope for the future lies in the training of the children. We are establishing schools for them and are in this way christianizing them, and we are progressing." "But, Bernie, if that is true—and I care not to dispute it—the whole business, according to

your own doctrine, is an inconsistency and a presumption."

"How do you make that out, father?"

"Well, you say your God is omnipotent. He can do whatever he may please. You say, He wants the heathen to follow this man, Christ whom you worship. Why, then does he not convert the heathen, himself? That would be easier and kinder than to require you and others to risk your lives and expend your treasure for the benefit of beings you never saw and in whom you have no direct interest? What is the use of omnipotence if it cannot be employed without your help?

This very question was once asked by Christians themselves, for I have read somewhere that when it was first proposed to send missionaries to foreign countries many of the preachers actually lost their tempers and denounced the proposition as blasphemous. They boldly said that these would-be missionaries were proposing to take God's own work out of his own hands. Now, what makes these modern fanatics so much wiser and philanthropic than those of past centuries? It seems that for ages the church was content to let the heathen work out his own destiny."

"Father, your argument against foreign missions has been repeatedly answered. You have asked some

questions which no one can answer, for they involve mysteries too profound for human solution. You ask why God does one thing in preference to another more in harmony with our notions of the fitness of things. I cannot explain it. I do not understand why God permitted sin and death to enter this world. Why did He create this world just the size it is? He could have made it larger or smaller if he had so chosen. Why did he make man at all? Why place him in circumstances which would permit moral degradations? Why did he suffer man to forfeit his original innocence when He could have prevented it? These are deep mysteries which we are not able with our limited faculties to unravel. Yet, father, it seems to me that your religion which you call evolution, is just as difficult of explanation. It is not fair to ask an opponent to remove objections that apply to all systems of religion. I believe that I with my brief experience and knowledge can ask questions which no evolutionist can satisfactorily answer."

"Name some, Bernie."

"Well, you say that the whole creation that comes within the bounds of human observation is the result of evolution."

"Yes, that is what I believe."

"Well, is evolution endowed with intelligence, reason and thought?"

"Evolution," answered the father with confidence in the infallibility of scientific principles "is the very embodiment of law and order; it is no person with attributes."

"You have observed, father, the beautiful adaptation of means to ends that prevails throughout the universe?"

"Certainly, that is one of the most striking features of evolution."

"Every marine animal" continued Bernard, "is endowed with organs that fit it for existence in its liquid environment. The bird again, has wings which qualify it for life in the atmosphere. Thus, everywhere there is evidence of intelligent design. Everything is adapted to the place it occupies in nature."

"Of course. It is useless to so gravely lay down your premises as tho' I would have the foolishness to dispute them. Go on."

"Now, father, is it not repugnant to all reason to suppose that all this beautiful and wonderful adaptation was originated by some blind, unconscious force without a scintilla of intelligence or thought?"

"It is simply the function of evolution to accomplish all this, and no explanation is necessary."

"There is another question I would ask."

"Proceed."

"Here is a horse, we will suppose, and a goose feeding in the same field, eating the same grass and drinking the same water. Can you explain why this same food turns into hair on one animal and on the other?"

"It is simply the law of evolution, and needs no explanation. We take results as we find them, and ask no questions. It would be foolish to ask what caused evolution or worry our brain about why and how it does this and that. Fact is what we want."

"Now, father, I have not had the opportunity to study theology as I expect to do. Some of the mysteries to which you have referred may become more clear when I have investigated. But at present you ought to have the generosity to make some allowance for my ignorance. But as a general answer to the solution of the difficulties you have suggested I want to remind you that the Bible is written from a human stand-point."

"What mean you by that?"

"I mean that God brings himself down to our level, so to speak, and addresses us as tho' he were a man possessed of human infirmities. When the Bible, therefore, says that God, for instance repented, it means only that if He had been a man He would have changed his mind."

When a disputant is at a loss for an answer, it is very convenient to take refuge in ridicule or personal abuse. So the father shook his head and smilingly said:

"That is quite ingenious, Bernie, and your conclusion is correct, if we grant the premises."

"You may laugh at me, father, if you will, but you cannot say that my view is incorrect."

"Let it go at that, Bernie, but what do you say to the contradiction involved in this foreign missionary business? Your God represents himself as exceedingly anxious for the salvation of the heathen, while he has the power in his hands to save them, and yet he does not lift a finger for their benefit, but sits on his golden throne idling away his time in the clouds and very self-complacently imposes the task on you and others like you. Your omnipotent God ought not to shirk his duty especially when it would cost him so little effort to perform it."

"It does not become me, father," said Bernie sadly, to rebuke my parent, but I do wish you could shape your assertions in language a little more reverent. Remember that we are talking about a divine Being."

"Well, you know my opinion about preachers and this whole business. It deserves no more reverence than any other political subject does. But never

mind; go on with what you were saying. I am listening." "You ask," continued Bernie, "why God does not save the heathen in some other way than that which he has chosen. All the answer I can give is that He created man in his own image, and placed him in the garden of Eden under the most favorable circumstances for the preservation of his native innocence and purity. There were no restrictions around him, except that he was commanded not to partake of the fruit of one single tree. Adam in the exercise of his free moral agency disobeyed the divine prohibition. You have read that he thereby fell from his high and holy estate, and in consequence was ejected into a cursed world to toil and moil amid the briers, thorns and thistles for the prolongation of his life. He was placed under the moral law and promised a glorious and eternal existence if he would obey it. As Adam was the federal head of his posterity they were involved in his fall, and are born in a state of guilt and misery. That is plain history stripped of all mystery. And now God in mercy offers salvation to the whole human race, and urges them with the most affectionate entreaty to accept His terms, which are reasonable and are of easy compliance. It is His choice to work through human instrumentalities. He does not send the glad tidings in the hands of angels—which he could do;

but if he did, men would not have an unobstructed opportunity to exercise their free moral agency. If an angel should come among them, his voice might frighten them into religion—and in that case they would only be hypocrites; or if God should speak to them in an audible voice, a great many of them would not dare to refuse his offers, and they would become Christians only outwardly. But Jesus, having full and complete knowledge of human nature, issued the great call, 'go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' I am trying in my feeble way to respond to the call. When I go before a heathen as a preacher, he perceives a man like himself. He will pay more attention to the message than to the messenger. I shall try to induce him to reason about the matter, and to become a Christian on rational grounds. But if an angel were in my place, the heathen's whole attention would be attracted to the messenger instead of the message. It seems to me that this is one reason why God carries on the work of foreign missions thro' the agency of human beings. There may be other reasons in the divine mind—and no doubt are—with which I am unacquainted. It is not necessary that He should reveal them to me. All I have to do is to respond to the call of Christ. If I disobey it, dear father, I do not believe I could take any interest in anything else. I

cannot trample down my convictions of duty. If I do, woe is me."

"I suppose it is useless to argue the question with you, Bernie. After all, who knows but this foreign missionary movement is a method, which evolution has adopted, of achieving some beneficent purpose."

"If that is so, father," said Bernie laughing "ought you not to help the movement along?"

"Evolution asks no help of any one, Bernie. It is in fact, a despotic tyrant. If you throw yourself under its wheels, like some foolish heathen casting himself before the car of juggernaut it rolls over you and crushes you without mercy. It is relentless and extravagant in its operations. It does not pause to mourn over the destruction it causes, nor to admire the beauty it brings out of chaos."

"And this cruel thing is the god you worship."

"I worship nothing, Bernie. I am but an insignificant atom in the universe, endowed with a moderate degree of intelligence that enables me to stand off as a curious spectator surveying and criticising the slow and gradual processes of evolution."

"Father," said Bernie with a modest laugh, "will you pardon my impudence when I say that your view of evolution not only surprises, but amuses me."

"What is so amusing?" asked the Colonel not seeming to take offense at his son's hilarity.

"Well, evolutionists say that man originated from an oyster."

"Or something similar to it."

"Well, what is the reason that oysters do not become men now? How could evolution stop the original process without thought or design? Again, how could blind, deaf, dumb and senseless evolution determine the different genera and species? You can by no sort of evolution turn a dog into a fish; and *vice versa*. Yet at some period of the process evolution must have possessed the power to do this, or there would be only one kind of animal. What principle explains the origin of a genus? How could evolution establish all the different genera, and then suddenly cease, as though its work were finished? Why should not primary processes be in existence to-day. All the men who attend oyster fields have never found one in the transition state—that is changing into some other animal of a higher form. That missing link, which has been the object of so much diligent search, has never been discovered. I cannot understand how evolution—if it is destitute of all thought and purpose—could put an end to original processes. Tell me, father how you explain such mysteries."

"I have already told you," answered the father somewhat nettled by such bewildering questions "that it is not necessary to the scientist to explain

such things. He simply takes facts as they present themselves. But I do not care to discuss the subject further. You are bent and determined to have your own way, and I shall not use another word to dissuade you from your purpose I here and now wash my hands of all responsibility. I repeat tho' that in self-defense I must disinherit you. If I were to give you any great amount of money, you would employ it in the promotion of a cause that by no means, appeals to my sympathies. I do this not that I want to see you suffer, but I do not want to see my dollars wasted."

It would be of no great interest to the reader to learn all the minute details of Bernard's experience. Suffice it to say that the next day he departed to the seminary. In due time he was accepted by the Committee of Foreign Missions and sent to China where we leave him for the present in faithful obedience to the call of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

Tekel.

IT has been stated in a preceding chapter that Mark Comerson frequently accompanied Cicely Bradford to church. It needs hardly be said that they attended more for securing entertainment than anything else. Accordingly they were both present one Sunday night at a revival service which was having remarkable effect upon the whole community of Holly Springs. We take the risk of giving the entire sermon which they heard on that occasion in order that the reader may more clearly understand the cause of the incident which occurred at its close. Besides it may be of service to the reader if he or she will give it attentive and prayerful perusal. The text was:

Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Daniel 5:27.

The preacher in a clear and solemn voice spoke as follows:

"The man that cannot derive a lesson of wisdom from the teachings of history reads to little purpose. It matters little to us what nations have done or individuals accomplished, if we cannot profit by their

examples and their experience. History is replete with useful instructions. It shows the various and different courses of action which nations and individuals have pursued, and the legitimate consequences resulting from them. The errors which have been committed both in physical and moral life are all plainly written, and we may regulate our conduct so as to avoid the rocks on which others have made ship-wreck. The voice of the past speaks to us from every page of the records of by-gone ages and warns us of the dangers that have brought calamity upon those who have preceded us on the arena of human existence. Wise is the man who reads and ponders and then shapes his course in accord with the dictates of practical judgment instead of responding to the Syren voice of sensual pleasure and heeding the seductive tones of temptation.

"Let us to-night learn a lesson from the words that shall constitute the foundation of my remarks: for they are fraught with profound significance and contain a striking warning, applicable to all times. They at once suggest the name of a proud city—in some respect the most interesting the world can show. It affords the most full and complete exemplification of prophecy of any place mentioned in the Old Testament. The unembellished history of Babylon and its fall is almost sufficient of itself to establish the

divine authenticity of the Bible; because its fate was foretold by Isaiah many years previous to its overthrow, and the name of the conqueror was given a century or two before his birth. Its downfall was recorded by profane historians, and it is marvellous that they have related every circumstance which the prophet of Israel had mentioned many years previously. The events which occurred fully justified the predictions, proving clearly that the hand of God had wrought the destruction of this mighty city thro' the instrumentality of the Persian Army. It is hardly probable that Babylon could have been overthrown by any exclusively human means, especially in that day and time when the art and science of war consisted more in individual prowess than in the destructive power of machinery. We are not to estimate the strength of an ancient city by the standard which prevails in these days. The world cannot now exhibit such a city as Babylon. It comprised a very large extent of territory, covering two hundred and twenty-five square miles. It was built in the form of a square, each side of which was fifteen miles. The fortification surrounding was probably the strongest in the world. A wall was constructed that rose to the astounding height of three hundred and fifty, and was eighty-seven feet in thickness. It extended around the entire city, which was

a distance of sixty miles. On the outside ran a ditch which was full of water, of whose dimensions we can form an idea from the fact that the wall was built of bricks manufactured out of the soil taken from it. The bricks were cemented together with bitumen—a glutinous slime arising out of the earth of that country, binding much stronger and firmer than mortar and soon grows harder than the bricks or stones which it cements together. The wall, therefore, was one solid rock, and its magnitude was sufficient to render futile every attempt to use the military facilities of that period. It was simply impossible to storm such a place. The city stood in grandeur and majesty, and from the great strength of its fortifications could bid defiance to all enemies. When Cyrus had overrun Assyria, and city after city had yielded to his aggressions his progress was suddenly arrested by the towering walls of Babylon. To think of taking such a place by storm was the extreme of folly. His army was, therefore, stationed around the walls as if for the purpose of a siege. The Babylonians, conscious of their security, ridiculed the idea, and from the top of the walls derided their insolent foe. They felt perfectly safe; because they had stores laid up in sufficient abundance to endure a seige of twenty years. Besides, they could cultivate the grounds within the walls and so maintain

themselves an indefinite period of time. The idea of starving them into submission seemed preposterous. With insulting coolness and indifference they closed the gates of brass, and gave themselves no further trouble in regard to the matter. Ah! a higher power was at work. The time had now come for the fulfilment of the prophecy uttered by the seer of Israel. The arrogant Babylon was now to furnish to the world a practical lesson of retribution and become a warning to future generations.

"It is recorded in history that one night King Belshazzar gave a splendid entertainment to a thousand of his Lords. This supercilious monarch defied the God of Israel, notwithstanding that he had the most indubitable proof of Jehovah's power and wrath. In his wickedness and sacrilege he was left without the excuse of ignorance. He could not have forgotten that his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had been the miserable recipient of a punishment as strange as it was severe—and that, too, for the very offense of which Belshazzar was guilty. Daniel had said to Nebuchadnezzar: 'they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen; and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven and seven times shall pass over thee till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men

and giveth it to whomsoever he will.' All this actually occurred and Belshazzar was fully acquainted with the facts. He sinned deliberately and wilfully. In his impious mockery the king and his princes and wives and concubines ate and drank.

"While they were thus feasting, it occurred to Belshazzar to insult the God of Israel by a still more aggravating exhibition of maliciousness; and he commanded to bring forth the gold and silver vessels which his father had taken from the temple at Jerusalem; and the King and his Lords and wives and concubines drank from them. This high-handed proceeding filled up the measure of Belshazzar's wickedness. God would no longer endure insults in silence. While the nocturnal revelry was at its height, a circumstance occurred which, at once, arrested the bacchanalian merriment of this carousing multitude.

Belshazzar abruptly pauses in astonishment, as high over head, the fingers of a man's hand appear, detached from any visible form. He gazes earnestly that he may not be deceived. His senses do not play false—there is the hand in the air. Trembling in every limb, his knees smiting one against the other, he watches the fearful apparition. The whole company suddenly become silent. Fear seizes upon every heart; every face is white and every tongue is

still. Look at that gay assembly, as they stand awe-stricken, gazing at those fingers in the air. Belshazzar's courage forsook him—his manly pride is gone; his countenance was changed and his thoughts troubled him, so that he lost self-control. And there he stands, transformed into a picture of terror and agony—with his protruding eyes intently fixed upon the wall.

"The strange hand begins to move. One by one characters are drawn out—and presently several words are visible—forming a sentence of fearful import. Belshazzar stares and tries hard to grasp the mystery. But the writing is in unknown characters and he cannot even pronounce the words which foreshadow his awful doom. He calls for the soothsayers and astrologers and wise men of his kingdom. They bring all their learning to bear upon the mysterious words, but all in vain.

"At length news of the confusion reaches the King's mother who was probably in a distant part of the palace—and she came in and looked at the writing. Judging from the narrative, she did not seem to be greatly disturbed. She merely said to her son: 'Let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed; there is a man in thy kingdom in whom dwells the spirit of the gods; let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.'

"Her advice was followed and Daniel was brought forward. And there stood the prophet of Israel in the midst of that maudlin assembly, calm and unmoved, while all eyes were bent upon him in terrible earnestness and intense solicitude. Belshazzar addresses him: 'Now if thou canst read the writing and make known to me the interpretation thereof thou shalt be clothed with scarlet and have a chain of gold about thy neck and shalt be third ruler in the kingdom.' The reply to this brilliant offer was worthy of one who held bribery in contempt: 'Let thy gifts be to thyself and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the King and make known to him the interpretation. This is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

"We might suppose that this fearful interpretation produced dismay and consternation, but it had no such effect. Belshazzar's curiosity was satisfied, and he endeavored to banish the subject from his mind. All agreed to postpone discussion of this amazing phenomenon till some future time—and the cry went up 'on with the dance.'

"Ah, if Belshazzar could have penetrated the dark-

ness and have seen what was transpiring outside of the city, he would have felt no disposition to prolong the irreverent orgies. The Persian Army was busily engaged at a ditch designed to divert the river Euphrates from its channel. This stream ran thro' Babylon, and along its channel was the only way possible by which an entrance into the city could be effected. The deep ditch on the North and South sides is at length opened, and the waters of the Euphrates begin to change their course. "And now, prophecy is accomplished; for, it had been said by the Lord, 'I will cause her sea to go dry! Presently the river no longer flows thro' Babylon; its waters are rushing along outside, and the magnificent city is powerless.

"Two armies begin to enter the deserted channel—one, on the North and the other on the South side. They advance quietly, meeting with no resistance. Jehovah himself was leading those armies. As the Persians advance, the alarm spreads thro' the streets; and the Babylonian soldiers are scattered in confusion. They either take to ignominious flight, or fall helpless under the savage stroke of the Persian sword. Presently the noise of the fight penetrates the royal palace, and a momentary silence ensues as the gay dancers hear the cry, "the foe! they come! they come. Alas, too late is the alarm given. The missiles of

death are flying thick and fast, and groans and shrieks break upon the midnight air, startling into sobriety the reeling inhabitants of Babylon. Belshazzar hastily seizes his sword, and is followed by his lords to join in the battle, but he never went from that scene of dissipation, mockery and blasphemy alive. The sacred narrative tells the story in a few tragic words: 'In that night was Belshazzar slain.'

"Babylon disappeared as tho' it had never been. Where human voices once resounded in hilarity, now desolation reigned supreme. The bat and the owl make their nests there, and fishes swim over the deserted streets, and the weird cry of the night-bird rings out, breaking the silence of slumbering nature; and the moaning wind sweeps over the stagnant waters howling a dismal requiem to departed greatness and glory. The desolate unknown spot remains a hidden monument to God's vengeance.

"My friends, this story suggests a moral so obvious that little comment is required. God still deals with nations and individuals as He did with Babylon and Belshazzar. Retributive justice overtakes those that violate divine law; sin brings its own reward in the present stage of existence. Many persons deny that God rules in the affairs of men, and they attribute the events of this world to accident. They cannot or will not see the hand of God in these things. They

deny that the Lord interferes in human affairs, or in any way controls the actions of men. Yet, God does rule in all the occurrences of time. It is unreasonable to suppose that Jehovah once determined the destinies of mighty cities and countries and sent terrible punishment upon nations and individuals, but that in this age of the world He has given them up to do just as they please. The very same reasons that required His intervention in by-gone ages are still in force. If He ruled then no good reason can be assigned why he should not rule now. Accident does not determine and control the commotions that now disturb human society. In the language of Scripture "the Lord reigneth," and well may the people tremble; for "in the hand of the Lord there is a cup and the wine is red; it is full of mixture and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall ring them out and drink them.

"We believe the events of this age are just as much under God's direction as the events of any other age. If this be so we ought to learn a lesson of warning from the fate of Belshazzar. We see from his history that the way of transgressors is hard. Ah, the sinner may appear prosperous; wealth may be in his possession till it surpasses the power of computation; he may be able to gratify every sensual desire; he may stand high on the lad-

der of fame, till he is intoxicated with the applause of admiring multitudes; he may be an object of envy on account of his worldly greatness—and yet, notwithstanding all this, there is an invisible hand over his head, and it writes in letters of fire; 'thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.' People still commit sins as flagrant as that of Belshazzar. His crime did not consist in merely making a great feast, but in the gross indignity he offered to the Most High. Oh, how many there are that insult the omnipotent God of heaven in a more shameful manner than the monarch of Babylon ever did. Humanly speaking, he was an innocent man when put in comparison, with unbelievers under the Christian dispensation. Tho' he insulted the mighty Jehovah, yet he offered no affront to 'God manifest in the flesh. He did not abuse and slander Jesus Christ as some of you do. He never understood the plan of salvation, and had the story of the cross rehearsed Sabbath after Sabbath as you do. He never knew that the man Jesus would come in the flesh to enact the bloody tragedy of Calvary. He had no knowledge that he was guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Trinity. He knew not the nature of God and His revelation as you do. Tho' he sinned deliberately and wilfully, yet he lived not in a land flooded with the full light of divine truth. People, then, who in

these days set their faces against the great God—who pursue a course of wickedness in defiance of the warning voice of truth—who make the night hideous with ungodly feasts, and blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ, and heap denunciation upon him as an impostor or fanatic and contemptuously reject his offers of mercy, and trample the blood of the covenant under foot as an unholy thing actually do worse than Belshazzar ever did. If then, the King of Babylon was condemned for dishonoring God, it is also written against every one of you impenetent transgressors 'thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting—yes, wanting in respect for your Maker—in sober reflection—in regard to the welfare of your own soul—in righteousness—wanting in everything that can secure the grace of God. Your merits when put in the balances weigh nothing against the outbreaking sins of which you are guilty —your violations of the Sabbath day—your wilful neglect of the means of grace—your filthy thoughts —your corrupting conceptions—your impure desires the shameful trickeries practiced in your dealings with your neighbors. Ah, they will rise against you mountain high and cry aloud to the very heavens for vengeance. Oh, man of sin, you would better wake up from your idle dream before an invisible hand shall write in characters that eternity can never ef-

face, 'thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.'

"There is another point in the history of Belshazzar that demands notice. When that awful sentence was written upon the wall, his doom was absolutely and eternally sealed. There were no conditions attached to it. We talk about free-agency! Why, Belshazzar had no power now to choose, nor to repent. He had to go on to destruction. You remember that when Daniel was called on to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he told the meaning and then exhorted him to break off from his sins. It would seem that he might have repented and avoided the fate foretold. But when the old prophet stood before that drunken assembly and explained the hand-writing on the wall, he offered no word of exhortation. He did not entreat the king to seek Godly repentance, for he believed that the measure of Belshazzar's iniquity was full, and the proud, defiant king must drink the cup of damnation to the dregs, and meet the terrible doom determined by a righteous God. Ah, man's free agency, of which we sometimes so loudly boast, does not last always. It is all a mistake to suppose that there is a chance of salvation for every man as long as he breathes the breath of life. We cannot tell how long he may sin without passing beyond the pale of salvation, but;

'There is a time, we know not when
A point, we know not where
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

After awhile the impenitent sinner does pass the last limit of divine grace, and then the invisible hand traces the terrific letters over his head, 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Then he is lost! lost! beyond all hope of redemption." He is deserted by the Holy Spirit, and has no power and no disposition to repent. On! on! to destruction he must go.

And now to bring the subject home, let us give the words of the text a literal meaning—literally weighed in the balances. See yourself, Oh man of sin, led into the chamber of divine justice to be weighed.

There is nothing in that room but the scales which are to determine your eternal destiny. You are alone with your Maker. There stand the scales all nicely adjusted, and which can record no error. Here on

earth men too often have false measures and weights; but God's balances are absolutely correct. No friend will be suffered to attend you in this fearful ordeal. You will have no mediator—no advocate to plead your cause. In this world you rejected Christ, the only mediator between God and man, but he will now leave you to be tested by the law. You will not be permitted to speak in your own defense, nor to extenuate any of your faults and short-comings. You will not be allowed to tell your Creator that you intended no harm by taking His name in vain: that your gambling and drunkenness and general dissipation were not meant as sin. He will not permit you to tell Him that you intended after awhile to turn from your evil way. No, no, but your wicked deeds and your foul thoughts are all now clinging to you to be weighed. What an ineffable moment. Alone with your Judge in the midst of undisturbed silence. Mount the scales! mount the scales!

What will you place in the other end as an off-set? The true believer will have the righteousness of Christ to overbalance all his transgressions. But what will you have? Nothing—and you and your unholy deeds will drop like lead to the floor! Alas! *wanting,* wanting! Then you will be led out of that silent apartment, and in the presence of the assembled universe you will hear your horrible doom pro-

nounced: 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Oh, sinner, if you feel the spirit of God moving on your heart and urging you to take refuge in Christ you would better move before the light of divine grace is extinguished in everlasting darkness. If you feel the slightest disposition to escape the wrath to come—if you have the least particle of fear in regard to the future, I tell you, you would better *move*. If you are not already dammed above ground, you would better shake off your lethargy and fly to the fountain of the Saviour's blood before the hidden hand writes: "Thou are weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Perhaps—who knows—that hand is at this moment over your head, and is about to write that tragically expressive word TEKEL. In God's name I beseech you, fly for your life! Wait another moment and it may be too late! too late! Come to Christ now, or you may be damned forever and ever!"

CHAPTER VI.

Perplexity.

AS the last words of the foregoing discourse fell, like a torrent from the preacher's lips, the word "stop," startled the congregation that had been listening in breathless silence. The unexpected word rang out frantically and shriekingly, tho' in a timid suppressed tone, as if the person from whom it suddenly escaped had lost self-control and self-consciousness, and then had abruptly recovered. No one knew what it meant. But immediately afterwards sobs were heard all over the house, and scores of people were seen wiping their eyes. But soon a scene was enacted that, we might say, capped the climax, and gave occasion for the outlet of the emotions which the sermon had aroused. A youth about eighteen years of age—totally blind—slowly rose from his seat in the rear of the church and with his walking cane feeling his way along the aisle, reached the altar and fell upon his knees at the "mourner's bench." The spectacle was too pathetic to be witnessed in silence, and the sympathies of the people were so deeply awakened that shouts

from men and women broke upon the atmosphere in all directions. One of the ministers present tried to quiet the tumult, and waved his hands to secure, attention, but all in vain. He took his seat as he said with a smile to a brother preacher:

"I will stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, as Moses commanded." People, instead of making any effort to control their sensibilities, encouraged the confusion by yielding without restraint to their holy impulses. They regarded the whole scene as the legitimate result of divine inspiration, and considered it sinful to resist, as they believed the work of the Holy Spirit. The consequence was many men, women, boys and girls went—some rushing frantically—to the altar till there was no room for more. That evening there were many "conversions."

Much has been written *pro* and *con,* upon such meetings. There can be no sort of doubt that some evil of grave character attaches to the institution; but in spite of that it has been engrafted upon the church for nearly two thousand years. Ever since the memorable day of pentecost when three thousand were brought into the visible kingdom of Christ, revivals have been a conspicuous element of ecclesiastical equipment. But no matter what objections may be urged, it cannot be denied that many great

and good men have gone forth from such revivals who were subsequently distinguished for their upright, consistent and irreproachable lives.

This one has been briefly described for the reason —among others not necessary to mention—that Mark and Cicely attended and remained apparently watching the proceedings with deep interest till the congregation finally dispersed at a late hour. They passed several blocks before a word was uttered when at last Cicely disturbed the silence:

"What is the matter with you, Mark? Why are you so silent?"

"I could propound the same question to you."

"And I can answer, I have been thinking."

"And so have I."

"Say, Mark," she broke off with energy, "did you ever hear such a sermon?"

"I tell you that for fervor of delivery and sincerity of purpose, I have never heard it surpassed. Such enthusiasm and earnestness I have never heard excelled."

"What effect did it have upon you?" she asked with a still more profound interest than she had yet shown, tho' the inquiry was propounded with shrinking timidity. "I do not mind telling you—as we are so much like brother and sister—that it has converted me into a Christian," he replied with deliberate em-

phasis as he was not certain as to how she would receive the announcement. "When Mr. ——— I wish I had learned his name."

"I learned it," interrupted Cicely, "for I inquired. It is Dr. Mirardeau. He comes from South Carolina."

"Thank you for telling me. He is certainly an exceptionally fine orator. But I was going on to tell you, when he described the hand about to write, I imagined very vividly—in fact, it seemed a veritable reality that it was over my head. I perceived the fingers move, and I watched the letters that were made. Presently there stood out in large characters a brief sentence."

"Thou art found wanting," she interrupted.

"No, no, Cicely," he answered in a tone of joy.

"It was 'go in peace, and sin no more.' Oh, I wish I could describe the feeling which pervaded my soul. A change suddenly came over my whole being. I had an impulse of love for the whole world of mankind. I yearned for the conversion of every human being. My soul was overcharged with love of Christ. Oh Cicely, the feeling of joy was simply ineffable. I was lost in the thought about all this when you broke the silence just now. I have frequently heard old persons speak of a similar experience, and wondered if it would ever be mine. I now know what they meant, for I have felt it all."

"Why, Mark, you astound me. Is that the way people become Christians?"

"Not all of them, Cicely, I imagine. But tell me, did the sermon have no effect on yourself?"

"I will be as candid as you are, because you are so much like a brother. I was ashamed of myself, Mark, and I intended not to tell you, unless you should find it out for yourself."

"Find out what, Cicely?"

"When the preacher described that same scene of the hand over head—say, Mark, didn't you hear some one cry out 'stop'?"

"Yes, and I imagined at first that the voice was like yours, but I promptly concluded that it could not be you."

"Why could it not?"

"Because it was too much out of keeping with your character. I thought you had too much self-possession for that."

"You pay me an undeserved compliment, Mark," she said in a tone which might be described as slightly reproachful, "for I am sure it was myself."

"Why, Cicely, is it possible?" he exclaimed in a voice of gladness.

"It certainly was and I was surprised and ashamed of myself instantly afterward. "How was it, Cicely? Tell me all about it."

"I, like yourself, imagined that the hand was over my head, and was beginning to move in the act of writing. I confess I was so afraid it would write the word Tekel, that I lost control of myself and cried out 'stop.' I was not conscious of speaking till the word had escaped my lips. Is it not wonderful how an orator, like Dr. Mirardeau, can sway peoples' minds and stir up their emotions to such an extent that they forget themselves and where they are?"

"No, Cicely, not wonderful at all when you consider that Dr. Mirardeau is only an instrument in the divine hands. I really believe that you were under the influence of the Holy Ghost."

"Do you believe that, Mark? I wish I could think so, too. But, I know almost nothing about such things. The truth is, I have rarely attended church till recently, and have done so mostly at your suggestion."

"I have been brought up in a Christian home, and I learned the theory of religion in my boyhood."

"That is why you have always been moral—at least, people say so."

"It is true that I have been moral. Somehow I have always had a repugnance to outbreaking wickedness, and have never liked wild company. *So, odi profanum vulgus et arceo,* as the old Latin poet says. But I knew little about experimental religion, till

now. It has come to me to-night. I am happy to say, and I am happy too, to think that you are at least under conviction, as Christian people say. I am of the opinion that you are already a Christian."

"I am sure I would be glad to think so, Mark, but I cannot believe that I am."

"Don't turn back, Cicely, and the full light will come to you, and you will be conscious that you are a changed being. If you feel inclined to go back, just think of the invisible hand over your head. What a fearful destiny that one word, Tekel, would describe."

"Mark," what a preacher you would make.

And I have heard quite a number of people predict that you finally would be one."

"I don't mind revealing to you another one of my secrets, Cicely. Any how, it could not be kept secret very long. I have deliberately made up my mind to be a preacher."

"Oh, Mark, is that really so?"

"Yes; and to-morrow I shall abandon the legal profession, and take up the study of theology."

"I am not surprised at your quickness of decision," she said dryly and as Mark thought, in a tone of indifference, "I wish you a full measure of success."

"But, that is the last brick that finishes the barrier between us," said Mark bluntly and sorrowfully.

"What do you mean, Mark?"

"I may as well tell the whole truth, since the subject has been mentioned—if it be permissible to refer to human affection and religion in the same breath. We agreed, if you have not forgotten, to continue our overt relation of brother and sister in the guise of mere friendship. This is easy enough for you, since the relation, in your thoughts, is altogether platonic."

It may be advisable here to say that it had never occurred to Mark that Cicely might be in the same state of love as himself. He did not believe that she had ever entertained for a moment the idea of marrying him. So profoundly was he convinced of this assumption that he had precluded her from any opportunity of making known a tender sentiment toward him—if any existed—without sacrificing her modesty, for he had told her that any other relation than that of friendship would be an impossibility. He had told her that such an obstacle, by reason, of her wealth, intervened between them, that it was absolutely insurmountable. He could not conceive how she could gain her own consent to wed a man as poor as himself. That she could give up the pleasures of her elegant home and take shelter under such a miserable abode as he could provide was a thought that no honorable man could permit to be discussed. And

he had told her all this in such a way that she could not offer protest, if she had felt so disposed. Even if her affection had been completely won, her sense of propriety forbade her to combat his notions and show him the fallacy of his assumption. He did not wish to subject himself to the pain of rejection, and therefore, barred the way to any expression of it by her. He believed that she had too much consideration for him as a friend, to want to wound his feelings by a refusal, and he deliberately placed her in such an attitude that she could not offer remonstrance without doing violence to every principle of maidenly reserve. Her self-respect would not allow her to make a proposal to him.

After reminding her that the relation between them was of an entirely platonic character so far as she was concerned, he said: "But with me it is entirely different. I might have known that I could not associate with you without loving you. Excuse my plain talk, but every day I am becoming more and more a fool about you. I have been allowing my affection to run riot without pausing to consider that sooner or later I must pay the penalty. I have been acting the part of chaperon, and may have been of some use as a convenience."

"O, Mark, how can you be so cruel?" she asked in a tremulous tone which he did not observe.

"How am I cruel, Cicely?"

"You are accusing me indirectly of hypocrisy."

"I am sure I meant nothing of the kind. You are the last woman against whom I would prefer such a charge. Ah, Cicely, he continued almost groaning, "I love you too tenderly ever to entertain an ill thought of you. I am simply stating facts. The hours I have passed in your company will ever be the greenest oasis in my memory, but with you they can be only indifferent reminiscences, if anything ever recalls them to your mind. Sometimes since I had the hardihood to hope that I might rise to a social equalty with yourself—"

"Why, Mark, this kind of talk is ridiculous. I do not understand you. I am sure I never have thought your position in society inferior to mine. Indeed, I assure you I have never given a thought to it at all."

"That may be true—and no doubt is—but you cannot blind yourself to the fact that the line is very sharply drawn between the rich and the poor. You may not think much about it now, you are so young and innocent, but in a few years you will recognize it, even if it makes no radical change in your present opinions. You are too inexperienced yet to appreciate the difference between the wealthy and the poorer classes."

"When," laughed Cicely, "did you get to be so much older than I that you can talk sagely like some old, ancient philosopher, while I stood stationary in the imbecility of childhood? How have you managed to acquire so much more experience than I?"

"I am not assuming to be wiser than you, but I have had perhaps more ample opportunities to observe facts. I have known several poor men who married heiresses, and everybody sneered at them as adventurers influenced solely by mercenary motives. Nobody believes that such marriages are the outgrowth of true love."

"But could they not be?" she asked timidly.

"Certainly it is possible that they could be; for I do not see why a man could not love a wealthy girl as well as a poor one if she is worthy of respect and affection. But knowing in what estimation poor men are held who secure rich wives, I could never offer myself to an heiress. God knows, Cicely, I love you with my whole heart, soul and strength, but I could never ask you to marry me, even if you loved me."

"Oh, Mark," laughed Cicely with a blush that the darkness prevented his seeing, "you are so blind."

Almost any young man in love would have taken this as an encouraging hint, but strange to say, Mark

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

never thought that the playful assertion was any indication of her state of heart, so convinced was he of the impossibility of her bestowing affection upon such a one as himself. He thought she had reference to the blindness of his views. "But there is no use of talking more about it, since I have determined to become a preacher. That is what I meant by the last brick that finishes the barrier between us. I know your opinion of preachers."

"But Mark, I am learning to respect them more than I ever did."

"But nothing would induce you to marry a preacher. I have heard you say so."

"We women," said Cicely laughing, "frequently say things we don't exactly mean. But what makes you say so positively that I would not marry a preacher?"

"Because any one as sensible as you are must perceive the incongruity of such a marriage. Don't you know that everybody would sneer at your husband? He would be as handicapped as if he had a millstone hanged about his neck."

"I don't see why, if he possessed meritorious qualities. Oh, I wouldn't marry just any and every preacher that comes along. But what objection could I have to such a one as we heard to-night? Besides, I have a cousin who is a preacher and whom I dearly love, tho' I have not seen him in several years. By

the way, you may possibly have known him at the University of Mississippi where he was graduated. He must have gone there about the time you did:" "What is his name?"

"Bernard Graham."

"Bernard Graham!" exclaimed Mark excitedly. "Why, he was my classmate and my roommate, and is the dearest friend I have on earth. I have corresponded with him ever since we left college, and I now write to him every week. Is it not strange that he has never mentioned your name in any of his letters to me, and is it not curious that you have never alluded to him?"

"I happened never to have thought of him while we were talking. I have not seen him in a long time, as I told you. But you know, of course, that he is in China, and that my uncle, his father, has disinherited him."

"For which Bernie cared not a straw," answered Mark quickly and emphatically. "In fact he did not want to be burdened with 'filthy lucre.' "

"Such a man as he is," said Cicely with energy, "is worthy of the affection of any woman on earth, rich or poor."

At this moment they arrived at Cicely's home—and they had been walking very slowly—when at the door she said: "Come in, Mark, and tell me some-

thing more about Cousin Bernard. I have not heard from him in quite awhile."

Mark could not resist the invitation, and in spite of all the difficulties that existed in his imagination, her manner of cordiality and her sparkling eyes that seemed to speak, thrilled him to the center of his being. It was a late hour, and that fact caused the enamored, infatuated youth to suppose exultingly that she must be very fond of his company. Why he should be so uplifted he did not know. She had not, by word at least, betrayed any unusually tender sentiment which his evident ignorance of the feminine nature would allow him to perceive. It would seem that any young man of ordinary intelligence would have eagerly seized the innuendo conveyed in her assertion that he was blind, and would have put upon it a flattering and encouraging construction. The truth was, as the experienced reader must have surmised, that she was madly in love with him, and no doubt would have told him so, if his obtrusiveness had not forestalled every opportunity. He had plainly declared he could never ask her to marry him. The ordinary sense of the "eternal fitness of things" forbade that she should recklessly overstep all barriers and make proposal to him. Why was he so dull of perception? she asked herself poutingly. Why could he not see from her treatment of him

that she fully reciprocated his feelings? It pained her deeply when he intimated that she was merely making a "convenience" of him. It startled her when he asserted that her wealth was a barrier which he could never over-ride. His character was perfectly transparent, and she was convinced that her money, instead of being an attraction was an object of repulsion. She believed that he would have made a proposal had it not been that she was heir—apparent to a princely fortune. And she would have consented to marry him even if he should become a preacher, and had almost admitted the fact when he so quickly and so bluntly throttled her opportunity by the declaration that he would ask no rich woman to marry him. What must she do next? It was a bewildering question.

They sat in the parlor an hour longer, talking about Bernard Graham till the theme was exhausted. When Mark was taking his leave he said with solemnity:

"I hope, Cicely, you will follow up the conviction which has so strangely come upon you to-night."

"I intend to be a Christian, Mark, and I want you to help me."

Cicely adhered to her intention, and continued to attend the revival services till she finally made a profession. Two weeks afterwards she and Mark both joined the church.

CHAPTER VII.

A Tempting Proposal.

AFTER Cicely Bradford attached herself to the church, as previously related, she became not only a consistent, but even a zealous member. The change was astounding to all her friends and acquaintances. It was certainly to be wondered at that a young lady addicted to secular pleasures, and having under her control the material elements of temporal felicity should suddenly give up all this and diligently and faithfully apply herself to the works of righteousness. But such an instance is not a unique episode in the history of the church. Thousands have done as she did, and furnished indubitable testimony to the expulsive power of the new affection that spiritual regeneration works in the soul. Many have been known to relinquish their whole store of worldly wealth and devote themselves soul and body, to the service of God.

But we must now turn our attention to an *affaire de coeur* which is surely not inappropriate to a religious story, altho' some "righteous-over-much" Christians think to the contrary—and "turn up" their olfactory organs at the very mention of human

affection between the sexes, as if it were a symptom of moral leprosy. Love is one of the strongest passions of human nature, and was implanted in the heart by the all-wise Creator for the accomplishment of holy purposes.

It is an elevating, ennobling passion when not abused by licentiousness, for it developes the best energies of humanity, softens down the acerbities of ill manners and elevates human beings from brutish degradation to the plane of chivalry.

These impromptu observations are the prelude to the statement that Cicely was in love, as we have already seen. She was greatly perplexed by the delicate situation in which Mark's notions of the "fitness of things" had placed her. While waiting for the affair to work out its own solution, an incident occurred which brought divergent matters to a focus. It happened that the young congressman of the district—not more than thirty years of age—visited the town of Holly Springs on business. He was invited to dinner one day by Major Bradford, Cicely's father, who "had an eye to business" in extending the invitation. The Major, while he liked Mark and admired his noble qualities of mind and heart, could not tolerate his seeming want of energy. It often happens that the world good-humoredly and laughingly charges that the preacher is fit for nothing

else. It ought to be borne in mind that his very unfitness for dealing with temporalities is one of the elements of a call to the ministry. So far from being a disadvantage it ought to be regarded as a qualfication almost necessary. At any rate, this unfitness for plunging into the whirling, noisy activities of trade and traffic removes the temptation to desert his high and holy vocation.

A day or two after the congressman had dined as before mentioned he called at the Major's office, and after the two had conversed awhile on some political affair, he said with a show of moderate embarrassment: "Major, I want to say something else to you on a very delicate subject."

"Well, the best way," replied Bradford, whose suspicion was aroused, "is to come right to the point without circumlocution."

"Then I ask your permission to pay my addresses to your daughter."

"Whom you have met but once," interrupted the proud father who was not greatly surprised at this sudden turn of affairs. It was no wonder to him that this elegant stranger should promptly lose his heart to his beloved child.

"That does not matter; I seem to have known her always, and I confess she has so impressed me that I would like to have the opportunity to win her. It

is a case of love at first sight. Of course, if I were not able to support her even in the style to which she is accustomed, I would be far from taking such a step, for I do not believe any man has the right to ask a woman to share a home of poverty. I do not believe I am under the necessity of defending my character as to morality. I have never been given to dissipation in my life, and have never even tasted ardent spirits. If you have objections on other grounds, I hope you will have the candor to acquaint me with them, and give me a chance to put myself in the correct attitude."

"I cannot think of any objections just now, Mr. Lagrue. Your father and I are old friends, and I think you are the worthy son of a noble sire. So far as that is concerned I have not a word to say in opposition to your wishes. But the truth is I should not like to see Cicely marry any one just yet. She is young yet, and has hardly developed into mature womanhood. Besides she is all the child I have, and I want to keep her under the parental roof as long as I can. Certainly I expect her to marry some day, but I would like to postpone it for some years, if possible. However, I do not propose to interfere with her freedom of choice, and I shall be governed by her wishes. I do not think that parents ought to act the tyrant over their children in this matter. I

shall offer no opposition to any one she may select, provided that he is a respectable man, of good common sense. Cicely is my only heir, and I do want her husband to have sense enough to manage her property after my death. I do not require that he shall be a rich man. Indeed, I do not care how poor he is, if he is only respectable, intelligent, honest and endowed with, as they say, with good, hard horse sense. I do not want a boorish snob for a son-in-law. You see I am a plain-spoken man, Lagrue. I speak what I think."

"That is all right, Major," answered Mr. Lagrue laughing—which he could afford to do, since none of the ugly epithets applied to himself. "I think you take a broad, practical view of the matter. Your accomplished daughter is a prize in more senses than one, but I do assure you, Major, that the numismatic phase of the case has not entered into my considerations. She herself is the prize to the possession of which I aspire, and if she had no prospect of inheriting a single farthing, my sentiment would be just the same. I hope you think that, Major?" "I believe you, Lagrue. So, go ahead, and I shall be glad to congratulate you, if you win her affection, only do not insist upon an early marriage."

Accordingly, Lagrue made several calls before he ventured to lift the veil which concealed the erotic

palpitations of his heart. He was quite a handsome young man, finely educated, refined and polished in manners—which might be expected, considering that he moved in the best society of Washington City, where his position in the capacity of congressman secured access to all social circles. Such a man, with such bright prospects, could not but prove attraction to the fair sex. It would seem to an outside observer that he was at least on equal terms with any other rival. Besides these personal advantages he had the approval of Major Bradford. It was only a few hours after his interview with Lagrue that he talked over the matter with Cicely.

"My dear Cicely," he said at the dinner table, "I know nothing about your love affairs."

"My love affairs!" interrupted Cicely with a merry laugh. "What do you mean, father?"

"Just what I say—I know nothing about them and have no wish to interfere with your choice of a husband."

Cicely looked at him in blank astonishment—as the novelists say—and then laughed more loudly than ever. She seemed to have no suspicion of what he was driving at.

"What are you talking about, father? I have made no choice of a husband."

"No," he said bluntly, "unless it be Mark Comer-

son—and such a possibility as that has never entered my head."

Most fathers would have had their suspicions awakened by the constant association of young men with their marriageable daughters, but the idea of Cicely caring anything for Mark as a lover had never occurred to him, and he had mentioned Mark's name in this connection as a mere help to the introduction of the main subject. "Of course," he continued, smiling blandly, "Mark is a good, easy, good-for-nothing sort of a fellow, but the idea of your marrying him is too absurd to talk about."

He failed to observe the shadow of seriousness that at once superseded the merry expression of mischief that had brightened her face. But she quickly rallied and again laughed.

"Who is talking about it, father, but you? I am sure I was not talking about it. But I will tell you, father, Mark has never asked me to marry him, even if I wished to. But she continued poutingly, "he is my friend, and I don't like to hear him slandered—especially since I have said nothing to call for it."

"Why, Cicely, I am not slandering him, but only speaking the truth. There is nobody I like better than Mark, simply as company." Surely he is good company," she said warmly, "and I find his society a source of enjoyment. I don't know what I would

have done without him. We have been and are as brother and sister, and he has kindly escorted me wherever I wanted to go."

"Certainly he has been useful in that way and I acknowledge my obligation to him. But all that is no reason why you should marry him."

The Major did not know why he was talking in this way. But Cicely fell back in her chair and gave way without restraint to her risibility.

"Father," she said in a moment after she had returned to her normal state, "what in the world is the meaning of all this circumlocution? I have not asked your consent to marry Mark, and I don't suppose he has broached the subject to you, has he?"

"No, no; really I had no business to make him the topic of conversation. It was mere accident that I mentioned him. Let us drop him. I want to talk to you about some one else. Now, you, my child, know that you must sooner or later marry somebody, and it is my desire that you shall, but not very soon. I want to keep you with me as long as I can. But after awhile you must have a protector in the shape of a husband. I don't want you to be a lonely old woman—that would never do. You must have some one to look after the property that will descend to you and manage it."

"Don't talk that way, dear father, you will make me cry."

"But you must take a common-sense view of things, Cicely. Life is a stubborn thing with us all, and so far as we can, we must prepare for its exigencies. But to come to the point I have been trying to reach, I want to tell you that Mr. Lagrue, like a true gentleman, has asked my permission to pay his addresses to you. He is a rising young man of noble qualities, and if you take a liking to him, I want you to understand I have no objection. He has been calling on you—at least once—and you can judge of his character yourself. He is in Congress now, but eventually he might become President of the United States. I tell you he is worth considering, child."

"But I don't want to marry now, father."

"I am glad to hear you say that, and I want you to put it off as long as possible, but you must do it after awhile. But mind me, I don't want to force you to marry the kind of man I would like to see your husband. Don't be governed by anything I might be tempted to say, but follow the dictates of your own heart. That is all I have to say."

Cicely was aware that her father would have used these words with more caution or with considerable modification, if he had been acquainted with the real

situation, but in the absence of such knowledge he had spoken inadvertently.

That same evening Mr. Lagrue called, and Cicely was in a flutter of expectancy—not however that wild, glad flutter which distinguishes the modest maiden who is eagerly and anxiously expecting a declaration from the man she loves. Cicely had too much honesty and honor to encourage the young man to persevere in his visits, but she could not blind herself to the fact that he had lost his heart—for which she had no reason to reproach herself. She was not at all surprised when, with that stuttering confusion which usually marks such occasions, he said:

"I have asked your father's permission to offer you my heart and hand—if—if—if you can possibly reciprocate my sentiment— but before I say more, would you regard it as a violation of propriety if I should inquire whether your affections are already engaged? If so, I flatter myself that I have too much honor to try to supplant my fortunate rival."

Could she tell a falsehood? Could she confess to this comparative stranger that an ineffaceable image covered the whole domain of her heart? These questions flashed into her mind, and she scarcely knew what answer to return to this plain pointed interogation. But after a brief pause she answered without visible disturbance of her composure!

"I see no necessity of replying to your question,

Mr. Lagrue; because, no matter what I may answer it is useless for you to pursue the subject further. But lest you should form an incorrect opinion I will tell you candidly that I am not engaged to be married."

"I am glad that you answer with such candor, and I hope that you will patiently hear me before you tell me that my pleading is all in vain. It is true that we have been acquainted only a short time, but you are the only woman I have ever loved in my life. I loved you the first moment my eyes rested upon you. I think that love is an involuntary impulse, rather emotion, and is not subject to the will. My heart leaped toward you spontaneously as soon as I beheld you. When I accepted your father's invitation to come under his roof, I had no idea that I should leave it with my feelings all so changed that it seems to me there can be no more happiness for me unless you can give me some little encouragement to hope. I could not expect—and do not ask—that you should express any warm regard for me. I only ask that you shall take time to consider what I say. I beg you to consider that—if you look upon my suit favorably—you will not be compelled to make the least sacrifice of the comforts to which you have been accustomed all your life. I can take you to a home in Washington as elegant as any one in reason could desire. As my companion you will have access to as

fine society as exists in the city. It shall be my aim to gratify every wish of yours, and I will do everything in my power to make you happy. What more can I say? Can you give me the least hope? Do not cast me off at once. Take time to consider this proposal. Will you?"

This little speech, it might be called, was made in a tone so subdued, beseeching and ardent that Cicely was moved to pity. She disliked to give pain to such a refined and sincere gentleman.

"Mr. Lagrue," she said with an air of genuine distress, "your declaration is very flattering to one in my humble station. I am truly surprised that you can turn away from all the fine ladies in Washington and make so tempting a proposal to a rustic girl brought up in provincial circles, I really am not your social equal. I am profoundly ignorant of the ways and fashions of the capitol."

"But you finished your education in New York, the chief emporium of the United States, so I am told."

"I was only a school girl and had no communication with fashionable society, and I have no ambition in that way."

"That makes no difference," he urgently insisted. "I do not ask you to become a woman of society unless you wish. What I want is a sweet tempered,

loveable wife with whom home would be the happiest place on earth."

"Then, Mr. Lagrue, seek the kind of wife you want among those who are above my station. You are worthy of any of them. Just at present I do not want to marry any one. I am happy here with my parents and friends, and I have no desire to leave them." "But such a one as you," he said pleasantly, "surely does not expect to grow up in old maidenhood. The world will not tolerate such as that. It would be the foulest injustice to yourself and some man whose life you would redeem from misery. It would be an outrage upon society to waste your life in such solitary obscurity as that—don't you think so?"

"Oh, no," laughed Cicely, "I am not going to be unmarried always, if I can help myself."

"You can help yourself any time you speak the word; but will you not consider my proposal? Only tell me that I may hope sometime in the future, and I shall try to wait with all the patience possible till you change your mind. Do not say positively that it will be useless ever to renew my suit."

"It would be wrong, Mr. Lagrue, to make any promise whatever. All that I can say at present is that I don't expect to marry any one soon. If you

can make that the basis of any hope you may get what comfort you can out of it."

"Even that is better than outright rejection, and I will try to be content."

"But remember I have made no promise at all. If you ever broach the subject again, you cannot reproach me with having deceived you."

And thus the interview ended. Cicely felt glad that she had gone through the ordeal so easily.

Soon after the young Congressman had taken his leave, Major Bradford entered the parlor where Cicely was buried in bewildering thought. He was a man noted in the community for his *brusquerie* and impetuosity and want of caution in addressing his fellowmen. Quick-tempered and impulsive, he uttered his uppermost thoughts without the least regard for the feelings of others. But one redeeming quality that made his blunt manner tolerable was, he was quick to repent and apologize for his hasty rudeness. It may be remarked that such men are never lacking in courage.

"Well, child," he said with pleasant bluntness, "what did you say, for I am satisfied that Lagrue made a proposal?"

"Father, I told him that I didn't care to leave my parents for any kind of husband."

"In other words you flatly rejected him."

"I don't know father, whether it was flat or round," she answered lightly, laughing, "but I told him I wouldn't marry any one at the present time."

"But surely you did not tell him that you would never listen to any renewal of his suit at any future time?"

"Not exactly that, father, but if he is a good logician and a moderate judge of woman's nature, he might have drawn the inference that a re-opening of the subject would be useless."

"I am afraid, Cicely, you are letting a splendid chance slip."

"Do you want me to marry him, father?"

"I don't want you to marry anybody right now. But you need not have dismissed him unconditionally. However, have it your own way. There is no necessity for hurry."

Cicely retired to her couch, and dreamed that she saw Mark Comerson sadly turn and walk away when he perceived her and Mr. Lagrue engaged in conversation.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Woman's Dilemma.

IT was the evening following the gentle, but indefinite rejection of Mr. Lagrue that Mark called again. Indeed, he dropped in so frequently and informally that he was—as it were—almost a member of the family. Major Bradford thought nothing of it, since the distance, metaphorically speaking, between him and Cicely was so vast, in some respects, that the idea of their marriage had never penetrated into his considerations. He had said that Mark was a "good, easy, good-for-nothing kind of fellow," and thought that he was useful to Cicely in much the way a footman or coachman might be. He was glad that she had such a convenient escort, always ready to accompany her to the theatre and the church or any other place she might wish to visit. It had not occurred to him that the world might not hold to the same opinions as his own. Of course, Cicely in due time would marry some one like Lagrue who moved in her social circle.

This evening Mark exhibited indication of mental dejection, which she at once perceived thro' the sixth

sense which it is said gives a woman the advantage over a man in the way of mind-reading. She was on such terms of familiarity with him that she did not shrink from making a confidant of him as tho' he were her own brother, and she revealed some of those heart secrets which most women keep to themselves. Mark's very kindness of manner invited confidence.

While they were talking, Mark made some remark concerning Lagrue.

"Yes," answered Cicely, "he called last evening, and what do you suppose he did?"

"I don't know, but I can guess pretty well: he asked you to marry him."

"You won't tell anybody, will you?"

"No, if you request me not to."

"Well, he did make a proposal."

"And did you not give him a favorable reply?"

"You know I didn't, she answered pettishly.

"I do not see why you should so insouciantly reject him. I feel sure he is a nice gentleman, occupying high position, and can offer you everything the world worships. Not many girls have the opportunity to refuse a congressman and a handsome millionaire. It might be the chance of your life, and it might not be wise to throw it away."

She bestowed on him a sadly reproachful look which he misinterpreted.

"Do you think I would marry a man I don't love?"

"How do I know that you do not love him? But that is for you to determine. But now changing the subject slightly. I am going to repeat what I said on a former occasion. I do not know but it is time for you to be considering the question of selecting a husband. There is no doubt that you will have many proposals. You are too shining a mark"—with a sad smile—"to escape the notice of men in search of companions, and, of course, you will accept some of them. It is not advisable to treat all of them as you have treated Mr. Lagrue. Now I do not want to be in anybody's way, nor discourage any one by paying such close attentions as I have been doing. The world no doubt, thinks that I am seeking a more intimate relation than exists between us. You have asked that we be friends, like brother and sister. But while that may suit you Cicely it is like death to me. After awhile—may be soon for aught I know—you will marry some one, and I shall drop out of your life like a pebble cast into a placid lake—a little splash—a small ripple—and then all is over. You know very well, Cicely, that I can make no proposal to you. I,

therefore, think it best that our association as brother and sister must cease. For my own good and for your sake I must cease to visit you. At any rate, it is a matter of indifference to you whether you see me or not."

"Have I ever said so, Mark?" while a deep blush spread over her face, which he in his strange obstinacy did not observe, or at least did not consider its significance. "I know it," he answered with some animation, "from the fact any other relation than that of mere friends is an utter impossibility. I have told you this before. But now since my destiny is to be a preacher, the impossibility is increased, if it is not a contradiction to say so."

"Oh, Mark, you are so blind!" she archly said.

Mirabile dictu! He did not once think what she might mean by the expression. He was not studying her facial features nor trying to gather hope from any language she might use. He had never thought for a moment that she entertained for him any but a sentiment of friendship. He was not now talking with any view of awakening her love for him, but only to prepare for the severance of the last tie that existed.

Without considering what she meant by her charming charge of metaphorical ophthalmia he abruptly said:

"Our intercourse must now come to an end. I must not call again. It would only do me harm and you no good."

"How does it harm you, Mark?"

"How does it harm me!" he cried as if vexed.

"Don't you see that I love you to distraction? I am becoming worse every day. I must leave you and see your face no more. I must go away, for if I stay here I will be sure to make a fool of myself by asking you to marry me."

"Suppose you ask me, Mark?" she spoke with blushing timidity.

"What for?" he cried in vexation. That you may have a laugh at my expense?

"No, I promise I will not laugh," seriously said.

"Then, you will mock at me."

"Oh, Mark, you are so blind!" she laughed.

He now looked at her face searchingly and thoughtfully as tho' a new idea of vast proportions were trying to penetrate into the obfuscation of a sluggish mind.

"That is twice you have used that expression. How am I blind?"

"Not to see that I like you."

"I suppose you do like me a little—just as a sister might like a brother."

"Well then," she exclaimed in desperation "you

are blind not to see that I love you, you great, monstrous booby."

Mark was sincerely dumb-stricken. He suddenly sprang to his feet and unconsciously seizing both her hands, exclaimed:

"See here, Cicely, don't make sport of me. I can't stand it. Are you serious?"

"Mark," she said in blushing embarrassment "it is repulsive to my native modesty to be forced to tell you that I love you as truly as woman ever loved man. You are forcing me to say this. I would not have said it, but I could see no other way."

"Great heavens, Cicely! you amaze and paralyze me. How can it be so?"

"I told you sometime ago that you were blind, and you did not take the hint—not much hint either. Could you not see all the time that I loved you?"

"Since when?" he asked with limbs, as the writers of fiction would say, quivering like the aspen.

"From the day you rescued me from the mad dog."

"Cicely," he said half laughing and half crying," I have always suspected that I was a fool, and now I know it. But let that pass for the present. Tell me, have you forgotten that I am to be a preacher?

Is it possible that you can consent to marry a preacher?"

"You have not asked me to marry you."

"Well, I ask you as plainly as language will allow—marry me, will you?"

"And I answer with equal plainness. I will unless you again block the way by declaring it to be an impossibility."

"You cannot blame me for having thought it impossible."

"What makes it so?"

"Why, the difference in our social positions, as I have said all along. You are rich and I am poor."

"If I am rich," she replied laughing, "I will divide with you. It seems to me you ought to be glad that I will have a little money."

"On the contrary it makes me blush with shame to think that people will say I sought you for your money."

"But I know better, Mark. Why should you care for the talk of foolish people? It is not possible that a little yellow metal can affect moral character. How can money elevate me above your station? I do hope you will never again intimate that there is any inequality in our conditions simply because I am so unfortunate as to be a prospective heiress. Suppose my father should disinherit me just as my

uncle did Bernard, what difference would that make with you?"

"As God knows my heart I would love you more than ever, if possible. I love you now to the full limit, it seems to me of my affections, and I do not see how anything could increase it. But," broke off Mark suddenly, "what will your father say?"

"Ah, Mark, there's the rub. I don't know what he will say, but we may safely assume that we will incur his opposition. Suppose we call him now and see?"

"The sooner, the better; we may as well have it out now," replied Mark involuntarily straightening himself up as if for battle. Cicely, going to the door, hastily asked her father to come into the parlor. She then hurried back, and taking Mark by the hand, both stood in the middle of the apartment awaiting in tremulous anxiety the anticipated storming of the citadel of their rapturous felicity.

"You must be spokesman, Mark" whisperingly.

"All right," answered he assuming an unconscious air of belligerence. Major Bradford paused in the doorway and looked inquiringly at the silent couple standing with clasped hands before him. Then a disagreeable suspicion seemed to dart into his mind. Then an angry flash darkened and crimsoned his face.

"What is the meaning of this childish scene?" he sternly demanded.

"The meaning is" answer Mark deliberately and firmly, "that I have had the presumption to ask Cicely to be my wife, and as she has consented. I ask your consent."

This answer, as slap-dash writers of fiction would say, "threw him off his base."

"Great God!" he fairly vociferated," is it possible, Cicely, that you have discarded Mr. Lagrue for this—this—this—

"Hold, Major!" interrupted Mark with reddening cheeks, "I advise you to be a little cautious as to the epithets you apply to me.

There is no necessity for the employment of harsh and ugly names. That is not becoming to a man of your dignity and intelligence. True, I am under your roof, but I give you warning that if you apply to me any word that is only a groundless slander and a palpable falsehood you so do at your own risk. I am a gentleman, Sir, and I allow no man to insult me with impunity, especially when he has not the excuse of provocation."

This was said with such tranquil dignity in connection with indisputable personal courage that the Major felt ferocity cooling down somewhat.

"Mark," he said in suppressed rage, "you'd better

take your hat and leave instantly before I forget myself."

"Now, come, Major, listen to reason. I cannot accept your kindly-meant invitation to leave under the peculiar circumstances. The situation forbids that I should suffer myself to be eliminated out of the question in such a forced solution. I could not leave instantly without a forfeiture of my self-respect. Remember who you are. You are a man of too much good, common-sense to settle such a delicate affair by violence. Let me beseech you in the most amiable way possible to control your angry passions; be seated quietly and talk the matter over in a friendly spirit; it can be settled in that way much more satisfactorily to all concerned."

"Well, for cool, comfounded, unadulterated impudence, this beats anything I have ever seen."

Mark, fully master of himself, had been stringing his words together very slightly tinged with concealed irony, and he answered the Major in the same vein.

"Of course, Major, the drama which has so suddenly and unexpectedly burst upon your vision is calculated to disturb your usual serenity, and I make all proper allowance for you. But I beg you for the sake of your daughter, whose happiness is at stake, to meet the situation fairly and squarely."

"See here, Cicely," he said like a drowning man catching at a straw, "this is just one of your mad pranks. Surely you are not in earnest."

"Why not, father? Mark loves me and I love him. Why shouldn't we marry?"

"Suppose I tell you that if you do marry him I shall disinherit you and will all my estate to your cousins?" spoke the Major with an air of ill-disguised triumph.

"Suppose you do, Major," spoke Mark, "it is nothing more than I expected; but it will not delay the marriage a single instant. If you think that I am influenced by mercenary considerations, you are greatly mistaken. Nothing could please me more than that Cicely should come to my humble abode without anything but her wearing apparel."

The Major perceived that nothing could be achieved by violent threats, and he determined to change his tactics. As already stated he was a man of quick impulses, and soon changed his moods. His anger suddenly disappeared, and his condition became normal.

"Can nothing induce you, Cicely to change this foolish notion of marrying Mark?"

"Nothing, father, unless you can prove to me that he is unworthy of my love. If you know anything against his moral character that would make

a wife ashamed of him, speak it out, and I will promptly put an end to the matter."

"Oh, as far as that is concerned I have nothing to say against him. But he told me the other day that he is going to be a preacher. Are you willing to be the wife of a preacher and content yourself with the kind of life you will have to lead?"

"It may not be such a life as would gratify secular ambition, but it is respectable and affords more solid happiness than any other kind of existence," replied Mark emphatically.

"It will not suit, Cicely."

"That remains to be proved, Major."

The Major fell into a brown study for a few moments, and acquired full control of his temper, and felt a little ashamed of the violence he had exhibited.

"Mark," he said cordially extending his hand. "I owe you an apology for having spoken so harshly just now, but my astonishment was so overwhelming that I lost my senses for a moment."

"I accept the apology, Major. To witness your keen disappointment is painful to my feelings. I wish you could be reconciled to the inevitable; but we must do the best we can with the situation."

"Well, 'there's no use of grieving over spilt milk,' as people say. You ought to know that I had other

views for Cicely, but if this calamity must befall my family—excuse me, Mark, for talking so plainly —we must make the most of it. You don't contemplate an early marriage, I hope?"

"That depends upon Cicely's wishes, Major. I am ready any time."

"She is very young to marry, and I would like for her to make the tour of Europe. Perhaps, in the course of her travels, she may meet with some one she likes better than yourself, and you ought to be willing to put her to the test. It would be a terrible tragedy if she should hastily marry you now and afterwards some other fellow should break up the scene of domestic felicity by winning her affections in spite of herself. I have known such dismal dramas to occur. I don't know any circumstance more pitiable to come into a woman's life than to love some other man than her husband."

"Is not that a risk which all of them must take?" asked Mark laughing in his sleeve; and amused at the Major's effort to arouse distrust.

"I suppose it is, more or less, but I mentioned this danger to Cicely, because I have believed for several years that she is a little too susceptible."

At this Cicely broke into unrestrained laughter.

"Do you consider me weak-minded, father?"

"I did not say that, child. But really, both of

you are very young, and I advise you for your ow
good to wait two or three years. Let Cicely go abroad
in the meantime, and travel will broaden her views
of things in general. While she is thus emplo
I will do something for you, Mark. You know very
well," he continued laughing, "that you have not
displayed much business energy—or, I mean no
harm, boy. I grant that your opportunities have
not been very abundant while you were studying law
and hunting in the forests. It is very frequently the
case that the management of a large business de-
velopes a man's energies. Now, I will make you a
proposition and give you a better chance than you
have had."

"What is it, Major?" asked Mark amused

"Well, if you will abandon this intention of
preaching—which is a mighty poor profession—and
I can't imagine why you selected it; you can't make
a living out of it for yourself, much less for two of
you—well, if you will give it up and return to the
practice of law. I will put all my business in your
hands and pay you a salary of five hundred dollars
a month. So, in two or three years you can accu-
mulate a sufficiency, by prudence and economy, to
enable you to start out on your matrimonial career
with tolerably fair prospects. Now, I think that
will be much better than riding a circuit like a

Methodist preacher. I suppose you know what a hard time most of them have. What do you say to my proposition?"

Mark had been listening respectfully, but he made no immediate reply.

"Take time," quickly said the Major, "take time to think about it, if you are not prepared to decide at once."

Mark turned to his prospective bride:

"What does Cicely say to it?"

"I cannot take the responsibility to decide such an important question. I leave it all to you, Mark. As Ruth said, 'thy people shall be my people and thy God shall be my God.' Decide it for yourself and whatever may be your decision, I shall approve."

"That is very kind and wise of you, Cicely, and I do not hesitate to shoulder the whole responsibility." Then respectfully turning to the Major, continued. "I can answer now, Major, just as I would do after a month's reflection. I wish I could turn my heart inside out for a moment, and let you see my most secret motives. Your proposition is kind, noble and generous, but Major, your religious opinions are widely different from mine. I, therefore, despair of making you see the subject from my point of view. The Call of Christ takes precedence

over every thing. Family ties must yield to it. That call is addressed to me—"

"But," interrupted the Major, "you might be mistaken about it just as some other preachers are. Many of them, I have not the least doubt, answered for somebody else, if we can judge by what they have done, afterwards."

"That is for them to decide, Major. I can speak only for myself. I have questioned myself closely on the subject, and if I had been governed by my feelings exclusively, I would now be in a position to consider your liberal proposition. But whenever I think of turning aside from this holy work, my conscience rises up like an armed giant, and so rebukes me that I dare not hesitate to go forward. If I should turn a deaf ear to this urgent call, I do not believe I would ever find another moment's happiness.

Under such circumstances, Major, can you ask me to give it up?"

"I confess I am no very good judge of such matters. I do not believe the Creator of the universe would trouble himself about you and me. If the bible is true he created us intelligent beings and he expects us to manage our own business without telling us what to do."

"If that is your opinion, Major, it is useless to discuss the subject any further."

Accordingly the interview came to an end, and Major Bradford left the apartment, a keenly disappointed man.

CHAPTER IX.

A Sad Event.

BERNARD GRAHAM, in accordance with his own request, had been sent to China by the Committee of Foreign Missions, and was now busily engaged in his chosen work. During all this time he had corresponded regularly with Mark Comerson. The last letter which Mark had received from him stated that he was in the enjoyment of splendid health and spirits, though he was deeply saddened by an unexpected event that cast a gloom over all the missionaries in that far-away country. "You, without doubt," he wrote, "remember our friend and classmate Samuel Mapsley, distinguished at the university for his rigid integrity of character. He was several years younger than myself, but was an unusually bright boy, whose mental aptitude for mastering our most difficult lessons made us wonder at his precocity. He was the genius of our class, though he never seemed to be conscious of his strength of mind. I do not believe he ever thought that he was superior to any mediocre boy of his own age. Such humility in conjunction with the highest type

of intellectual brilliancy was surely marvelous. He reminded me of the celebrated De Quincy, who, we are told, at the age of thirteen, could have conversed with the Greeks in their vernacular tongue. And all these splendid gifts he laid on the altar of Christ. Young as he was, he was an indefatigable worker, impelled by unflagging enthusiasm. His very soul was absorbed in his heroic efforts to stem the tide of barbarism. He was doing a grand work when he was prostrated by malignant fever. He appreciated his critical condition, and predicted from the first attack that he would never recover. He had a presentiment, he told me, to that effect. But his resignation to the divine will was sublime. It called forth my tears to hear him speak of the deep distress of his parents when they should learn of his early departure to the glorious mansions which Christ is preparing for all His faithful followers. I never saw firmer faith in one so young. Not the faintest shadow of doubt obscured his moral sky. His perfect trust in the Saviour has increased my own wavering faith. But, oh, it was all so sad! Here he was thousands of miles distant from his native country, and so far away from his mother, about whom he raved in his delirium—oh, it made me cry like a child.

"We did everything in our power to smooth his

passage to the tomb, and grieved over our inability to afford relief. Every one loved him and was glad to minister to his wants, but it was not like being at home, and dying among one's relatives. It was a sorrowful group that wept over his lonely grave, when we laid him away to rest, just as the sun was sinking to his ocean bed. Oh, the ways of the Master are mysterious—past finding out. It is a severe blow to our missionary band—especially as we do not see how the vacancy can be filled at anything like an early date. The thought has occurred to me that the Call of Christ might come to you, and that there is a possibility that you might step into his place in the ranks. I am not the least surprised to learn that you will soon be a preacher of the gospel. I believe I predicted, when we were about leaving college, that you would finally decide to go into the ministry. Who knows but God has prepared you for the vacancy which the lamentable death of young Mapsley has caused? Much more strange things than that have happened. I would be so delighted to have you as a fellow-worker. Have your reflections or musings even never run along that channel? By the way, a pleasant thought has come to me in this connection. In one of your recent letters you refer to my cousin, Cicely Bradford, whom I have not seen in a number of years. She is now a grown

woman, and must be a beautiful one, for she was a very handsome little girl. Is it not just a little strange that you have never alluded to her in any of your letters, except one in which you describe a revival meeting at which you think she was converted? Do you know it strikes me that your reticence in regard to her has some significance in it? Must I attribute it to sly caution or dumb insouciance? Have you nothing more than a bare speaking acquaintance with her? Do you not call on her sometimes? You might do so semi-occasionally, and if you cannot find anything to talk about, you could make me the topic of conversation—at least to relieve the embarrassing pauses that occur when two young people of opposite sexes are left alone. I will have to do violence to my sense of propriety if I give utterance to the thought that is now sneaking into my mind. Now, would it not be somewhat remarkable if she should marry a preacher and become a foreign missionary? As the poet has it, that would be a "consummation to be devoutly wished." Yet, this is but a feeble picture in my mind, because she has everything in her environment to attract her to the fasionable world. I conceive that her wealth would be a serious hindrance. 'How hardly shall the rich enter the kingdom of heaven,' declares the Master. Still, it needs not be regarded as an amaz-

ing miracle that Cicely should be influenced to abandon her luxurious home in order to aid in proclaiming glad tidings to the heathen. But delicacy forbids pursuing the subject further unless I had something more definite before me.

"But I must tell you how happy I am in my work. I used to think that this glorious work would be marked by a calm, monotonous placidity that would keep one in a constantly comfortable frame of mind. But at times I experience ecstatic thrills which no pen can describe. Occasionally I feel myself exalted to the third heaven of bliss and glory, reminding me of what Paul said about himself when he could not tell whether he was in or out of the body. Certainly I meet with things every day that are inexpressibly sad. Degrading superstition characterizes this people that fills me with astonishment. How a being of any intelligence and reason can hold to such creeds surpasses my comprehension. Their abominable customs are too numerous to mention in a private letter. You can read about them in books and newspapers. The opium habit, which has crept into all ranks of society, is a disgrace to the whole country. The civilized nations of the world ought to try to suppress it. It is the greatest physical and moral curse that afflicts this interesting country. It seems that mere moral suasion can accomplish absolutely

nothing. I have talked with numbers of people, but it is simply throwing words to the winds to tell the miserable victims of the horrors of their hideous vice, which saps all their energies of body and mind. They are hypocrites and will do anything to obtain the poisonous drug that is hurrying them, by millions, to the grave. It seems impossible to christianize them. But some of their social customs can be improved, perhaps abolished. For instance, my heart is constantly pained by the sight of children wearing wooden shoes, too small for them, in order to prevent the growth of their feet. I have seen the poor little wretches twisting and squirming in an agony of suffering. The foreign missionary work would pay if it did nothing more than secure the abolition of such a monstrous practice. You cannot imagine the exquisite pain to which these little ones are subjected.

"I would write more about the religious aspects of China, but it is not necessary in the case of a man of your intelligence and general information. I hope God will put it into your heart to come over and help us fight the awful, soul-harrowing profligacy that pervades all ranks of Chinese society, from the highest to the lowest."

The foregoing excerpts from the long epistle of Bernard Graham awakened in Mark's mind a train

of reflection that ended in the most painful scepticism. The untimely—that is untimely in his view—death of young Mapsley, especially aroused vague feelings of doubt—than which nothing so disturbs the true believer. Like Bunyan's pilgrim, Mark found himself wallowing and floundering in the slough of despond. He recalled the promise of Christ Jesus in connection with the great commission, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." He thought the premature fall of young Mapsley a strange incongruity—not to use a more forceful term. Why should he be stricken down just as he had entered upon his life's work? The church was loudly calling for more laborers to reap the whitened harvest. What encouragement to young men who were discussing the propriety of obeying the call was this seemingly unnecessary removal of an earnest worker? The young man had carefully prepared himself for the work— had sacrificed the delightful amenities of civilization and the pleasures of home—and the society of loving friends—all for what? To be attacked by scorching disease, and to breathe out his young life among strangers. The lamentable event seemed to be disjointed, unnecessary—out of harmony with a beneficent economy. What necessity could impel divine Providence to demand such a sacrifice? Why should

this consecrated youth be taken away from his benevolent work, and another spared who was but a useless encumbrance to human society? If one promise could fail of fulfillment, why might not the whole Bible, with its multiplicity of unequivocal promises be only an imposition upon human credulity? Horrid suspicion, like a loathsome, slimy reptile, began to creep into his mind; and nothing so perturbs the Christian's faith and distresses his heart as doubt in regard to the authenticity of the Holy Oracles. It shocks his moral energies and demoralizes his whole spiritual being. He has no heart to pray when he begins to suspect that his Bible is only a myth—the result of superstition on a par with other heathen mythologies.

Mark was too good a lawyer and too shrewd a logician to disregard the historical evidence that sustains the religion of Mary's son. From the very first he perceived that the foundation of all Christian theology was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If that event were true, the whole superstructure could bid defiance to all the assaults of the keenest infidelity. In theory, Mark's orthodoxy could stand the test. It was the moral government of the world that troubled him. He could not blind himself to the fact that, while the natural world presented the evidence of design and the intelligible

sequences of effect and cause, the moral world was sadly marred by disorder and confusion. There seemed to be little connection between promise and practice.

While in this state of mind he was one day passing by the study of Dr. Braig, who, at that time, was the pastor of a church in Holly Springs, and whose tragic fate some years afterwards aroused profound sorrow in all the Southern States. Mark thought it would be advisable to drop in without ceremony, and disclose his spiritual difficulties to this man of God, whom the whole community respected and loved. This beloved minister, while he made no pretention to oratory, was an earnest, faithful pastor—orthodox to the core.

After Mark had candidly revealed his scepticism, caused by the death of young Mapsley, Dr. Braig said:

"You are tackling matters of divine Providence, which usually bring bewilderment to all thinking Christians—especially the young, and I am not at all surprised at it. It is not an indication of disbelief, but on the contrary, is a hopeful sign, because it shows that you are not blindly accepting religion. I suppose that every true believer goes through a period of doubt and perplexity. My experience and observation have taught me that the more you try

to understand the mysteries of Providence the more you will be troubled. It is a dark problem whose solution will never be achieved in this world. It is an old saying that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. God had some wise purpose to accomplish in young Mapsley's death. We must not allow ourselves to misinterpret the divine promises. The Master never promised his servants who labor in foreign lands that they should be exempt from suffering and death. On the contrary, he told them that these evils—as the world calls them—should be expected. They are factors—sad it is true—in the promulgation of the Gospel. Sometimes we can perceive the purpose in them, but more frequently they are hidden from us. Samuel Mapsley's early death will not, as you intimated just now, deter other young men from volunteering for the foreign field. On the other hand, it will direct attention to the necessities of that grand and glorious work, and stimulate others to follow in his footsteps. No doubt other young men are reflecting upon it and wondering at it just as you are doing, and God may put it in their hearts to take his vacant place in the ranks; and so the gap may be filled by more than one. If so, we cannot say that this death is unnecessary. I do not, by any means, assert that such is God's purpose, but only that it might be—and in the

absence of ability to assign any other, we may take that view. But it does not matter whether you and I understand it or not, we may rest assured that this death is not in vain. Perhaps," continued Dr. Braig, looking at him inquiringly, "you, yourself, may be asking the question if it is not a call to you?"

"No," answered Mark, "I have not considered the matter in that light at all. True, I am a preacher, or soon will be, but my conviction is that my duty at present is at home. But if I thought that this death, or any other circumstance, a call to me, I should not hesitate to respond. I shall promptly repair to whatever station duty shall lead."

"I believe you," said Dr. Braig, warmly. "I have never said anything to you about it, but I have been watching your career with deep interest. By the way, Dr. B. M. Farmer will preach in my church next Sabbath on the subject of foreign missions, and I would be glad if you could make it convenient to hear him. He is a man of national reputation, and is one of our most powerful preachers."

"I gladly accept the invitation, Doctor."

After some further conversation, which would be of no great interest to the reader, they separated, and Mark was in a much more satisfactory state of mind.

CHAPTTR X.

A Vital Question.

MARK and Cicely both attended Dr. Braig's church on the following Sabbath. A large congregation greeted the distinguished minister, who, it was published in the papers, would occupy the pulpit. He was a small, ordinary-looking man, but was one of the finest preachers of that day and time. We give the substance of the sermon he preached without any attempt to preserve the exact language in which it was delivered. We present it almost entire for the sake of maintaining the connection of our story and in the hope that it may possibly have some influence upon some young man that may be perusing these hastily-written pages. After song and prayer, Dr. B. M. Farmer announced his text and preach as follows:

"How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"—Romans x: 14.

SERMON.

When we contemplate the works of Almighty God we meet with problems of a most perplexing character. His ways are not our ways, and are past finding out; we do not understand them. There are many things pertaining to the economy of divine grace which we do not and cannot fully comprehend. We confess that God's moral government of this world is mysterious. His purposes have not been fully revealed to us. Many of them lie hidden in His own mind, and will never be known to us till the great day of judgment. From a mere human standpoint, we might conclude that His purposes are really thwarted. There are some Scriptural expressions, which, if taken literally, would drive us to the conclusion that God has not accomplished what He intended. It might appear to us, in our short-sightedness, that the whole human race ought to be saved. Why God suffers any to be lost when he has the power to save them, we cannot tell. We may assume reasons which bear marks of plausibility; but after all, we are in ignorance. Yet you and I are concerned with facts, and we must not be wise above what is written.

I am to-day to call your attention to a subject which is bewildering in some respects— and that is

the destiny of the heathen. Many persons contend that the heathen will be saved because of their inability to reach the means of grace. I will cheerfully admit that, if we are authorized to found our religious creed on simply human modes of thought and human ideas of justice, it might seem that those who are ignorant of Gospel truth, ought not to be condemned for non-compliance with laws of which they have never heard: I will go a step further and affirm that they are not condemned for this. The question is sometimes propounded, what will be done with such a man as Socrates, who thirsted for truth and would, no doubt, have embraced it, had it been presented to him. Thoughtless human nature would reply that God ought to save him. But let us examine this question of the salvation of the heathen in the light of God's truth, connected with the dictates of sober reason—and let us see if the two do not harmonize.

Here in the text we have an explicit statement of the practical execution of the scheme of redemption. We are told that it is impossible for men to apply to Him in whom they have not believed. They must hear; they must know the truth before they can believe. No one will dispute such a proposition as this: truth must be understood before it can be embraced. In order that it may be embraced, there

must be teachers to reveal and explain it. These teachers must be sent by those who have already received the Gospel.

Such is the simple plan by which God gathers men into the kingdom of heaven. He has revealed His will in the clearest manner, and given it to us in written, permanent form, so that the truth will never be lost. He demands that those who have received this truth shall make it known to the world. Well then, does the apostle propound the question: "How shall they hear without a preacher?" By the foolishness of preaching it has pleased God to save sinners. Men may object to this method because it involves trouble and expense. Reason itself might suggest the inquiry, why should not God reveal Himself to every man and communicate to him his duty? The Lord once appeared in the flame and smoke of Sinai and proclaimed His law in the hearing of all Israel. Why should He not practice the same method now? Why should He not, at least occasionally, speak out in audible voice, and thus remove every doubt as to His will, and so disarm scepticism and infidelity? He could do so; for He is omnipotent; and so far as we know, there is nothing to prevent His so doing. In reply to all such questions, we can only say in the language already quoted: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The divine plan has been made known, and we have no right to ask why God should not adopt some other plan better suited to our human views and more in accordance with our wishes. It is sufficient for us to know that preaching is God's method of offering mercy to a lost and ruined world. Well, now there is only one plan of salvation, and there never has been but one. The assertion is in accord with Scripture that no human being has ever been saved, or ever will be, outside of that plan. The economy of grace does not vary. God does not have one plan for us Gentiles and another for the Jews and another for the heathen. Only this path to heaven is known, and outside of that it is death. There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved, except that of the Lord Jesus Christ. If, therefore, men trust in any other name, they will be lost. There is no possible way to avoid that conclusion. We are told that God, outside of Christ, is a consuming fire. The Jews may trust to the righteousness of the Mosaic dispensation, but if there is any truth in the Scriptures of the New Testament, God is nothing to them but a fire. Reject Christ and every possibility of future life in glory is destroyed. Christ is God, and to deny Him is practically to embrace atheism. No matter how sincere the Jew and the heathen may be in their belief, they

will be lost if they die in that belief. Some people seem to be under the impression that if a man is simply *honest* in his religious belief he will be saved. Now let us examine this theory a little. Here are the Jews, who are, no doubt, sincere in their opinion that Christ was not the Messiah. Those who had Him put to death did not believe that He was the Son of God. They, therefore, rejected Him, and clung with the most astounding tenacity to the principles of Judaism; they were as honest in this as it is possible for men to be. When Paul stood holding the raiment of those who were casting stones upon Steven, he was just as honest in the commission of that tragedy as he afterwards was in his belief of the truth of the Christian religion. But did his honesty justify him? Now, can we believe that those men who clamored for the blood of Christ and mocked Him in the agonies of death, will be acquitted at the bar of Eternal Justice, because they were honest in their opinions? Will you justify that man who honestly believes there is no God? Will you justify the Deist, who honestly spurns the Bible as an imposition and a forgery? Why, the position of those who hold up mere honesty of belief as sufficient to insure salvation is in contravention of all Scripture, and besides, it is refuted by the example of the Apostles. When they began to scatter

throughout the world, why did they insist with such vehement earnestness that it was necessary to embrace Christ in order to be saved? When they entered the synagogues, why did they not say: "You Jews are honest in your rejection of Christ and in your belief of Phariseeism; you cannot sincerely receive Christ as your Saviour; then, be faithful to the precepts of the Mosaic dispensation; continue to observe your sacrifices and trust to the righteousness of the law? Again, why did they insist that Jupiter, Diana and all the multitude of fabled deities should be dethroned in abhorrence? The heathen were perfectly honest in their worship of idols; and yet, the Apostles seemed to regard it as absolutely necessary to unsettle them in this belief. So everywhere their proclamation was, "There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. Through Christ was the only way of escape from eternal woe. If nothing were necessary but sincerity, the whole atonement of Jesus Christ could be dispensed with: His blood was shed to no purpose. But that mere honesty of belief is sufficient to make any kind of religion acceptable to God is contrary to the plainest teaching of Scripture. We are told that "without the shedding of blood there could be no remission. Therefore, the conclusion is that he who does not trust to it will land in perdi-

tion. Ignorance of the plan of salvation is no excuse in the sight of God. If it were, then this Bible is the greatest curse that has ever been inflicted on any people. It would be far better that all of us should have been heathen if men are saved simply on the ground of ignorance. If I thought the heathen could be saved without the Gospel, my philanthropy would demand that I withhold it from them, for by sending it to them, I would cause many of them to be lost, who, otherwise, would be saved. If they are saved because of their ignorance, why send the Gospel to them at all? It may be replied that the Christian religion is best for them here on earth. But earthly happiness is a small matter compared with eternal suffering in the world of woe. If they are saved because of their ignorance, we would better let them alone in their superstition—let them worship idols if they will—let them burn and drown their little children in sacrifice to their senseless gods. True, their horrid rites may cause much physical and mental suffering: the heathen mother's heart may ache when she casts her helpless infant into fire, but what of that? These are but momentary pangs and are mere trifles compared with everlasting misery. Leave her alone in her blind idolatry; if ignorance saves she will meet the little one again in the Paradise of God, and will be happy forever. En-

lighten her mind, and you may cause her to writhe in the flames of torment forever. I do not see how the argument can be refuted.

But it may be asked on what principle, or by what rule will the heathen be judged? Will they be condemned on no other ground than that they have not complied with a law of which they have never heard? Will they be sent to eternal torment simply for not believing in a Saviour, of whose very name they are ignorant? I reply that Paul tells very clearly how they will be judged. He says that the Gentiles, who have not the law, are a law unto themselves: there is the law written in their hearts. They are left without excuse; for when they know what is right they do wrong. The old heathen poet, Ovid, ages ago wrote that we know the right, but we do the wrong. They go contrary to the law written on their heart. Paul tells us they can and do obtain some knowledge of God from His works, but they abuse this knowledge and sin in the face of the light which they have. They fail to come up to the standard which their own reason enables them to establish. For instance, Socrates acknowledged that there was only one Supreme being—in his heart this was his honest belief—and yet, on his death-bed, he requested a friend to pay a vow which he had made to one of the Pagan gods. There was the law writ-

ten on his heart, but he disobeyed it; he went contrary to the dictates of his own judgment. Now, on what principle ought he to be saved? Judged by his own standard, he ought to be condemned.

And so it is with every heathen. Not one complies with the law written on his heart. And if he does not, how can he be declared innocent by the righteous God?

Besides all this, is the heathen really qualified for the enjoyment of heaven? Is he prepared for that holy place, whose pleasures can be appreciated only by those whose hearts have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit. For instance, here is a Mohammedan—the follower of a fanatic or impostor. He is perfectly honest in his adherence to the ludicrous teachings of the Koran. That book permits him to indulge in sensual gratifications without restraint. His conceptions of Paradise are of a low, grovelling character. He has no idea of Christian purity of heart. That holiness which is described in God's Word finds no place in his thoughts; he is a stranger to all pious meditation. According to his notions, he will be transferred after death to a region where he will have still greater liberty to indulge those disgraceful lusts that belong to the flesh. His heart would revolt at those glorious pursuits which constitute the employment of saints washed in the blood

of Christ. He has no taste for such a heaven as that delineated in the Christian's Bible. He loves those very sins that are so awfully denounced in God's Word. His imagination is steeped in shameless sensuality, and all his desires are tainted with the most beastly lusts. In the name of reason, is such a one qualified for that bright abode, where no impurity is known? It would be repugnant to all his desires and inclinations. When he would enter the realms of celestial glory and behold the mighty multitude clad in white robes and hear their joyous cry, "holy! holy! Lord God Almighty," he would rush from the dazzling splendor of purity and leap from the jasper walls into outer darkness. Heaven, with its sinless delights, its transcendent glories, its unfading joys, would be a hell to him—just as it is to every one who is not prepared for it. It would then be an act of justice, yea of mercy, in the All-wise God to banish him from a place where he could find no employment congenial to his nature.

It stands to reason then—and it is in accord with the teachings of Scripture—that the heathen cannot be saved on account of their ignorance. However disagreeable the conclusion may be to us, we must accept it as stubborn truth.

This view of the subject gives to our text an aspect of deep solemnity and of vital importance. It

ought to be the watch-word of the church—"How shall they hear without a preacher?" The heathens are perishing without the Gospel. Cast your eye abroad over the face of the earth. Look at the millions that have never heard of the name of Jesus Christ. They are wallowing in the mire of the most odious superstition. They are guilty of crimes against God and nature. See that car of juggernaut as it rolls along the streets amid thousands prostrate on the earth in order to honor a horried idol made with human hands. As it moves on, enthusiastic and fanatical worshipers cast themselves under the ponderous wheels and are crushed to death. They think by this terrible suicide they have secured the favor of their god. See that crowd standing around the brazen idol, called Molech? They are beating drums and making all the noise they possibly can. And what does this scene of confusion mean? That idol of brass is heated up with fire. The priest has placed in his outstretched arms a helpless infant, and a great noise is made to drown the piteous screams of the burning child, that the parents may not hear. Such intense devotion to a piece of metal awakes within us emotions of pity and horror. We stand amazed and appalled at the performance of such sanguinary ceremonies.

See that mother standing on the banks of the

Ganges with her little infant in her arms. There is a wild tumult in her breast. She hugs the darling little one to her heart, and would give worlds to retain it in her possession. But according to her notions, that stern god she worships demands the sacrifice, and demands that she shall make it with cheerfulness. She makes a strong effort to choke down the rising tears, and she strives hard to overcome the pleadings of maternal affection. With the energy of despair, she imprints the last kiss on its cheek, as it looks up into her face with a smile—and then, with trembling frenzy, she hurls it into the river and rushes from the spot with a bursting heart. No wonder, my friends, that you weep at the picture. The poor mother has sinned against God and against nature.

All these awful and frightfully shocking scenes have been witnessed in this world. If they are not now of so common occurrence, it is because such horrid customs have been put down by the blessed influences of the Christian religion. It is because the truth in Jesus Christ has thus far triumphed over superstition and dispelled the clouds of ignorance. It is the religion of Jesus that has snatched the tender infant from the flames and the waves and placed it in the weeping mother's arms, with the command to love it and train it up in the nurture and admoni-

tion of the Lord. It is the glorious Gospel of Peace that can fill the bleeding heart with joy. That holy religion has not yet flooded the world with its glorious light. The heathen still bows down to senseless wood and stone. They ought to be saved. But "how shall they hear without a preacher?" Whose duty is it to send the Gospel to the perishing millions of earth? It is mine—it is yours—it is everybody's that has the least regard for the highest interest of fellow-beings. If there is any one of the benevolent schemes of the church that ought to take precedence over others it seems that it ought to be foreign missions. The condition of the heathen is sad enough to awaken our warmest sympathies. They are hastening down to eternal ruin in utter ignorance of the everlasting rest that remaineth to the people of God. Multiplied millions have no opportunity of taking refuge in Christ, because they have never heard of Him. They are wandering in thick darkness. They have never experienced the genial influences of that high and refined civilization which is the outgrowth of Christianity. They need to be enlightened. They ought to be raised in the scale of nations; but above all their souls ought to be saved. We who, under the guiding providences of God, have escaped the horrors of barbarism and paganism ought to open our hearts and our purses and send

them the blessed Gospel of love. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Let each one of us seriously ponder the question, and let us wake up to a proper sense of our duty. Let us use every possible effort to send the glad tidings to all the nations of earth. We believe the church has not displayed activity enough in this glorious cause. We, who are Christians, do not somehow seem to realize the full measure of the obligation resting on us to send the joyful news of salvation throughout the whole earth. We appear to be satisfied to sit still in our sluggish activity and enjoy the smiles of God's love while our neighbors are perishing. We cannot realize the horrors which we have escaped. Suppose no Gospel had ever been preached to us, and we had never heard of Jesus Christ—instead of being here to-day in this temple dedicated to the service of the true and living God, we would probably be watching the car of a horrid idol rolling along the streets and crushing out the lives of some of our dearest friends. It might be that some of us would be so fanatically zealous in our terrible worship that we would take our little children, about whom are entwined our warmest affections, and with aching, bleeding, breaking hearts and bitter tears streaming down our cheeks, cast them into the crackling flames, and our friends would beat upon drums in order to drown their heart-piercing

screams. Oh, thou mother, who lovest thy little one with such tender affection, couldest thou tolerate the thought of tearing the darling child from thy arms and hurling it into the devouring wave? Oh, by the love which you have for your own dear child, I call on you this day, come to the rescue of your benighted sister in foreign lands. Save her from that bloody superstition which makes her think it is necessary to suppress the purest, holiest affection of the maternal heart and cast her sleeping, innocent little babe into the strangling water and the consuming fire. Oh, by that broad principle of philanthropic charity which ought to extend to every spot where a human eye beams and a human heart beats, I appeal to you *all* and I ask you to come to the help of those who are groaning under the terrors of heathenism. True, some of you may differ from me in reference to the doctrine I have preached to-day. But, then, whatever may be our individual opinions, there is one point on which all of us are agreed—and that is, the Gospel is necessary to the heathen. Our Master places that point beyond all controversy, because He says, "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to EVERY creature. No matter, then, whether the heathen are saved or lost, it is our duty to preach to them. The command is as broad as the earth itself. We must either go, or we must send. It does

not suit many of us to give up our earthly vocations and go in person with the Gospel in our hands. But we can discharge our duty in another way. We can use our means to assist those who will go in our stead. There are persons ready to forsake home, country and friends in order to preach Jesus to the heathen; but how shall they hear except they be sent? Let the church endeavor to send them. Let her wake up from her stupidity and indifference and put forth all her energies in this cause till earth's remotest nation has learned Messiah's name. God grant that the wave of salvation may roll on and on till that promise be fulfilled which says, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance."

CHAPTER XI.

Hard Trials.

OUR two friends and lovers were slowly winding their way homeward after attentively listening to the foregoing discourse, which Dr. B. M. Farmer delivered in his usually impressive way. He had profoundly touched the feelings of his congregation, if one might judge from the free use of their pocket-handkerchiefs. Mark and Cicely seemed to be in a deep study and spoke very little—and that, too, on subjects in which neither felt any interest. What they did say appeared to be for the purpose of relieving the embarrassment which results from total silence. If they had been husband and wife their reticence would not have been a matter of wonder—so snarling cynicism would say. But on this occasion, each looking at the other, could perceive that they were avoiding a theme which they dreaded to discuss. It was not till they were seated in Major Bradford's parlor that any allusion was made to the morning's service.

"Mark, how did you like the preacher to-day?"

"Oh, fine," he answered, in a tone which Cicely thought indicated indifference.

"Wasn't it a little more than 'Oh, fine?'" said Cicely, good-humoredly mocking him.

"I will not say I thought the sermon superfine, though I was struck by the position he took in regard to the salvation of the heathen. I had never thought before that all heathen would be lost."

"Is that your opinion?"

"I never had any special opinion on the subject. I really had never thought about it till to-day."

"What do you think, now?"

"I am inclined to Dr. Farmer's view. For if the heathen can be saved without the Gospel, I see no use in sending it."

"Mark, the sermon, or something had a powerful effect on you. I could read it in your face."

"You are not mistaken, Cicely. The sermon deeply moved me and lead to a conclusion which I dread to mention."

"You needn't fear, for I have guessed it."

"What is your guess?"

"I don't want to tell you yet, for I fear that my guess might lead you to suppose that I approve your determination."

"I am sorry to hear you say that, Cicely."

"Well, out with it, and let me know the worst."

"It is not my practice to whip around the stump.

and in a word, my determination is to go to the foreign field."

"There, I knew it," she exclaimed, throwing up her hands as if surprised.

"You have forestalled me by saying just now that you did not approve."

"Mark, can I hope to dissuade you from this purpose? I consented with alacrity to become a preacher's wife. I do not consider it a sacrifice to aid you in my sphere, and to encourage you to preach to your own people; and surely they need it as much as the heathen. But is it not a little too exacting to ask me to make so painful a sacrifice?"

"I have not asked you to make any sacrifice, Cicely," he said, with a return to the old manner of sadness which had clung to him till Cicely promised to be his wife. Since then he had been cheerful and vivacious; but now he shrank back as he heard the first muttering of a brewing storm. A great gap seemed to be re-opening, and the happiness of the past weeks commenced to slip away.

"But you know I will have to make a tremendous sacrifice if we consummate our engagement. My dear mother is gone." (This is a fact which we have not recorded, because the event, though a sad, domestic affliction, had no close and pertinent connection with the story).

"My dear mother is gone; my father is all alone, and now you ask me to leave him in solitary sorrow. You know what a bitter disappointment it was to him to consent to our marriage. You remember with what reluctance he did it. He thought that he could see me sometimes at least, but to go to some foreign country, where he would possibly see me no more in this world—he could not stand it. You ask me to leave all my friends, and reside among people of whose customs I am ignorant, and between whom and myself there cannot be the least congeniality of feeling and sentiment, and you ask me to give up the pleasures of civilization for the horrors of barbarism!"

"I ask you—if the word 'ask' is proper—to make no greater sacrifice than I would make myself. Do you suppose that the thought of all these disadvantages and hardships is not as painful to me as to you? The associations that bind me to my native land are as dear to me as they can be to any one. I, too, love my friends and relatives. I will have to bid adieu to my parents and the delights of refined society. But all such considerations sink into a secondary place when put in the balance against the claims of Christ. The call to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature fell upon my ears today with the force of an unexpected cyclone. I tried

to turn a deaf ear to it. I struggled and reasoned against it and suggested every argument that even ingenious sophistry could conceive. But down under all this I had an irrepressible conviction that woe is me if I preach not the Gospel to the heathen. You cannot imagine the battle I fought in the church to-day. A savage storm was raging through my whole being. At one time I almost gnashed my teeth, and said 'I will not go.' Instantly all the props seemed to be swept from under me, and I felt myself going down beneath the billows of rebellion. I saw heaven slipping away from me. I saw the horrors of hell," he cried, springing to his feet, "rising up to meet me."

He paused in his speech, and paced two or three times across the floor, while Cicely was watching him in amazed anxiety. Approaching her chair, he seized both her hands, and exclaimed:

"Cicely, God knows I would decline the call if I had the courage to dare. But, I tell you, I am afraid. I can no more resist than I can fly. I wish I could open my inner moral being and let you see the conflict which was tearing my very heart into shreds. While sinking into the black abysm, I cried, 'Lord, pity me, but I will go.' I yielded all in an instant—and I despair of making you understand the feeling of peace that took possession of me. My

determination suddenly restored my tranquillity. Such a feeling of joy came over me that I wanted to rise and tell the preacher that I would go. I suppose a sense of propriety restrained me. I am happy at this moment as I think of the effect of the victory I gained over myself and the wiles of Satan."

"Mark, your excitement just now alarmed me, and—excuse me—but it set me to wondering if you might not be the victim of incipient insanity. Is it not possible that you gave way to the spell of Dr. Farmer's eloquence?"

"I asked myself that question, Cicely, and tried to persuade myself that it might be mental aberration that would pass away with the occasion that produced it. I generally do not give way to emotion."

"No, I know that, and that is why I was so surprised at your excitement."

"Don't you remember how Dr. Farmer held out his arms in describing the heated idol with outstretched hands?"

"I should say I do," exclaimed Cicely, with a laugh. "He fairly startled me."

"Well, the preacher seemed to me to be that horrid idol, and I saw the priest place the screaming infant in his hands. Oh, it was all I could do to keep my seat! I felt like rushing forward and snatching

the child out of his hands. Then in a short time began the struggle with myself. But I have gained the victory."

"Oh, Mark, I wish I could boast of such a victory! I am wicked and selfish. But I do not feel any call to go to foreign lands as clearly as you seem to do. It all seems to me as nothing but self-sacrifice and self-denial."

"That is the only thing that now grieves me, Cicely. I have fought the battle, and I have won. I have not and I shall not ask you to make any sacrifice. I have no right to do it. You are under promise, but it is not too late for you to recede."

"What do you mean, Mark?" asked Cicely, looking at him as though a little frightened.

"I mean that I cannot ask you to follow the same pathway that the finger of Providence points out to me."

"Speaking plainly, you want to break off our engagement."

"To mention it is like tearing out my heart. Oh, Cicely, I love you with a fervent devotion that language is too poor to describe. I do not believe any man ever loved a woman with more deathless tenacity than I love you. You are next to Christ in my affection. I often ask myself how I could live without you. The thought of separation makes me fairly

shudder. But the change in my purpose gives a new aspect to the situation. If you decline to become the wife of a foreign missionary, then the awful question faces me, shall I give you up, or Christ. 'My God,' he cried, with a suppressed wail of terror, 'what a question to decide!' It makes my reason reel on its throne. But if you will not go with me as my wife, then, there is nothing left for me but to choose Christ and go alone. The whole matter is in your hands."

It would be a misrepresentation to say that Cicely was not delighted with this demonstration of such deep, powerful, intense love. It thrilled her whole being, and made her feel that he was a man worthy of her heart's purest and profoundest love. What a difference there was between him and Mr. Lagrue. The young congressman, handsome and brilliant, had addressed her in language polite and even sincere, but after all, she could not but ask herself if her fortune might not be the consideration that had so suddenly aroused his affection. But the impeachment of Mark's motives was simply an impossibility. She believed that if she had been as poor as Ruth, who industriously followed in the wake of Boaz's workmen, to gather up any stray bits of wheat, he would rather rejoice at her poverty, because he would then be on an equality with herself. But she felt

herself unable to decide such a momentous question. In a state of doubt, confusion and hesitation, she suddenly said: "Mark, let us call in father and hear what he has to say?"

"I am so well acquainted with his notions that I can easily imagine. I dread to be a witness of the scene that will be enacted. But he will soon learn of my decision anyhow; and I guess we may as well have it out now."

Accordingly, Major Bradford was in a few moments seated in the parlor with the sad expression, lingering on his face, of one who had recently lost a beloved companion.

"Well," cried the Major in scornful irony that is indicative of indifference.

"Major," spoke up Mark, promptly, "I have decided upon my field of ministerial labor, and I think it right to acquaint you with my determination."

"You must excuse me for saying it, Mark, but I feel very little interest in it."

"But, Major, it may affect your domestic relations!"

"I believe it is understood that Cicely is to marry you in spite of my wishes. You are to be a preacher, and it matters little to me where you may perform the functions of your vocation. I suppose that you

and Cicely will now and then visit me in my loneliness—and that is all there is to it."

"But, Major, what will you say when I tell you that I have decided to enter the foreign missionary work?"

Notwithstanding his appearance of inattentive curiosity, this information made him start from his seat. The enormity of the intelligence suddenly broke upon him. An angry flush diffused itself all over his features, forecasting what Mark had dreaded.

"That means, you propose to marry Cicely and take her away to some barbarous region, where I can never see her again."

"Oh, Major," interposed Mark, "it is not so bad as that. The missionary gets a vacation every ten years, I believe."

"Well," cried the Major in scornful irony, "that means I may reckon on seeing her twice in twenty years. She is all I have to love in the world," looking at her tenderly and with moistened eyes—all of which caused crystal drops to stream down her cheeks. "I cannot reasonably expect to live much beyond twenty years, and in all that time it breaks my heart to think I can see her only twice. If her poor mother were alive, I might stand it. But to be left all alone in the world—oh, the thought is intolerable!"

"Oh, father, you are killing me," she said, without attempt at self-restraint. "I don't see how you can ask me to leave him, Mark! Can you ask it?"

"I have already told you, Cicely, that I do not ask you to do so."

"It is that, or let you go alone. What an awful dilemma I am in! I will have to leave one or the other. There is no other alternative that I can see."

"Mark," said the Major, changing his voice to a tone indicating vexation, "for the life of me, I can't see that it is so incumbent upon you to take this step—this foolish step, I can't help but call it. There are thousands of young men all over the country who would be glad of the job, and who are without hindrance of any kind. You needn't tell me that God is in such straits that he must call upon the very ones to make sacrifices to whom it is most inconvenient. Why should he pass by all these idlers and pounce upon one who could make himself useful in his own country?"

"Major," said Mark, pained by the man's apparent levity and lack of reverence, "you speak of the ministry as though it were on a level with the vocation of the merchant or blacksmith. You ought to bear it in mind that you are talking of the mighty God, who made you and all things."

"I can't help it, Mark. I have always considered preaching a trade or profession like any other, and have thought that the preacher would work for the church that paid the best salary. Don't they all preach for money?"

"That is the last consideration, Major, unless the preacher be a hypocrite. Certainly, there are a few wolves in sheep's clothing among ministers, but you cannot say there are many. Taking them altogether, you cannot find a more honest and pure body of men on earth. How many preachers have you ever seen sent to the penitentiaries? If the ministry is on an exact par with all secular vocations, it is strange that it fails to furnish a proportionate quota of criminals."

"Well, I notice that they always take money when it is tendered. But let it go. I have made you an offer in the way of business, which any young man with your prospects would have jumped at, and you refuse as though it were a mere bagatelle."

"Not that I do not appreciate your kindness, Major, and not that I undervalue the magnitude of your splendid offer, but the call of Christ is so superior to all worldly consideratons and so imperative that they cannot be put in comparison. They are so different that I do not feel like discussing them in the same breath."

"I confess," said the Major, "that your views are too sublimated for my comprehension. I am but a plain-spoken, blunt man and try to take a common-sense view of all questions. I conceive religion to be only a superstition, and yours is like scores of others that have flourished awhile and passed away. It may be a horrible thought to you, but the Christian religion will be supplanted by some other when it has run its course. But what is the use of quarreling about it? I understand Cicely to say that she will not leave me. Do you really mean it, child?"

"I do, father." Turning to Mark she said: "I am afraid you are a little too exacting. I have some ideas of duty myself, and I conceive that my duty demands that I shall not desert my father in the hour of trial and bereavement. You require me to give up too much, Mark."

This was spoken with firmness, though in a tone of reproach barely perceptible. She could not but feel that she was on the brink of a volcano, and her own words went through her breast like jagged arrows.

"You are mistaken, Cicely, that I require sacrifice on your part. I ask nothing. Decide the question with the fear of God before your eyes. But, understand, once for all that I go to China, unless the Master shows me clearly that such is not my duty.

I hope you will not try to dissuade me from my purpose."

"No, Mark; I know you too well for that. You are determined to go at all hazards. But my duty, as I see it, is to remain with my father—at least for the present—and you will have to go without me."

"The engagement is all off, then, is it?" asked the Major, with a gladness which he made no effort to conceal or disguise. "It is for Cicely to decide. If she says she will not go with me, then God's will be done," said Mark, with deep solemnity.

"Mark," spoke the Major, in a more kindly tone than he had yet used, "I have thought from the first that you and Cicely are not suited to each other. There is, in my opinion—so far as I can judge human nature—no congeniality between you. I honestly believe it would be best for both of you to pursue different pathways of life. Forget all about this engagement, and be only good friends, as you were before you thought of marriage. Separate for good, and sometime in the future you will be amused at this episode as an evidence of early indiscretion. All this talk about broken hearts, by reason of disappointed love, is mere childish folly, which you will laugh at after awhile."

The Major said this with a light jocularity which was not contagious. Neither one of his auditors felt

mirthful. Cicely, as the novelists would say, had turned a shade paler, and Mark presented the aspect of one who had been rudely cast down from the very zenith of human felicity to the nadir of the profoundest grief.

Presently he slowly rose from his seat, shook hands with the Major, and then, taking Cicely by the hand, said in a trembling tone: "Farewell. God bless you and keep and bestow upon you all the happiness that can be expected in this world." He then turned, without the utterance of another word, and left the father and daughter alone. If Mark could have beheld the little scene that transpired immediately after his departure, his dejection and distress would have been increased. As the echo of his footsteps died away in the hall, Cicely threw her arms about the Major's neck and said, in a low tremulous tone:

"Oh, it will kill me, father!"

"No, no, child," he said, with some emotion; "it will not kill you. Mark my word, Cicely, the day will come when you will be glad that you did not marry him."

Here we would better bring this sad chapter to an end.

CHAPTER XII.

Disappointments Deep.

SOON after the sad sequel to Mark and Cicely's once smoothly-flowing love story, he departed to his chosen field in China. The course of true love never did run smooth, declares the poet, who, for aught we know, obtained his knowledge from his own personal experience; but whether he did or not, this couple, happy for so many months, found by sorrowful experience that their case was, by no means, an exception. Their parting was somewhat tragical, though it gave secret pleasure to Major Bradford.

Mark was in such haste to be gone from a spot, whose associations could be only a torment, that he determined not to take the prescribed course at the theological seminary. He came under the head of "extraordinary cases" and was licensed and ordained to preach at once. The very next day after this was done, he boarded the train which would take him to the Pacific coast, where he would take a steamer, bound for the Celestial Empire. It was with a heavy heart he crossed the ocean, whose broad expanse

would separate him forever, as he fully believed, from the only woman he had ever loved, or ever could love, as he thought. He had before him the gloomy prospect of single-blessedness. He would make no effort to supplant her image by expulsion, in favor of another. For him there was only one Cicely dwelling on this sublunary sphere. However, many a man has had the same thought, who, afterwards, accidentally met with another *Duleinea del Toboso,* whose charming personality made him wonder that another feminine image had filled the whole horizon of his affection. But Mark was too young to extract any great consolation from such a fact. Yet, he found a grain of comfort—and a large grain, too—in the fact that he was associated with Bernard Graham. This fact was, indeed, a determinate factor in his choice of China as his field of missionary labor. He was instantly associated with his beloved old friend—a circumstance that went a long ways in the direction of compensation for the loss of Cicely. Bernard symphasized with him as far as it was possible. He could not enter into all of Mark's feelings from the fact that the little "blind god" had not as yet touched his heart with the famous golden arrow. Mark concealed nothing from his dear friend in regard to this delicate matter. Bernard would look at him pityingly and say: "God will help you

to bear the misfortune, if it really is such. Perhaps it is for your good. Who knows but you may meet with some other woman whom you may honor with greater devotion than you have ever felt for Cicely."

"That is impossible, Bernie; utterly so. You know nothing about such things, or you would not talk that way. I love her with all my mind, heart and soul. Sometimes I have thought it might be a sin to concentrate my affections so entirely upon a human being. You do not understand such a feeling," continued Mark, with a sad little laugh that reminded Bernard of an invalid convalescent. "You are without experience on the subject."

"True," said Bernard, "I have no experience, since my mother and sister are the only females I have ever loved. I, therefore, admit the truth of your accusation and confess my ignorance—for which, I begin to believe, I ought to be thankful. But I think I can imagine what you feel, to a certain extent, at least. But, say Mark," breaking off suddenly, "it is a delicate matter, but did you ever think that your life with my cousin might, instead of happiness, bring you misery?"

"What makes you think so?"

"I did not say I thought so, because I do not know. But it occurs to me that there is such a difference in your dispositions that you might constantly dis-

agree,—might engage in quarrels, you know, as married people often do?"

"Major Bradford intimated that himself, and had the kindness to suggest that we both might find it a source of consolation for our disappointment. But

'Who can cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?'

That reminds me—when I was a boy I was going to a certain place, and I asked a man which road to take, and he said, 'at the forks up yonder, take the right-hand road, and when you travel it a short distance, you will wish you had taken the left.' Was it not that old philosopher, Ben Franklin, who said, 'If you do marry, you will regret it, and if you don't marry you will be sorry of it, and whichever you do, you will repent of it?' So the whole matter resolves itself into the question, which of two evils you will take? You would have me endure one misery, because another, that is imaginary, might be worse. You say that Cicely and I are different in disposition—how do you know that? You have not seen her in a long time."

"No; but I am basing my opinion upon what you have told me yourself and what I knew of her in her younger days."

"Well, granting your premises—I have read somewhere—in some book on phrenology, I believe that husbands and wives ought to be different in temperament in order to prevent social stagnation. They ought, in fact, be opposite, so that there may be no monotonous equilibrium of their lives. Who wants a woman that has no well-defined opinions of her own and has not the ability and the obstinacy to contend for them?"

"You are skilful in the use of sophistry, Mark."

Mark did not appear to notice the interruption, but went on:

"Besides, don't you know that we cannot love whom we please? If we could do that, it would eliminate much disappointment out of our lives. I never made the slightest effort to love Cicely. On the contrary, I have tried to efface her image from the tablets of my heart. But the harder I tried the deeper it seemed to engrave itself."

"Don't try at all, Mark, but just let things rock along as they will. Who knows but she may change her mind and be glad to come to China, yet. But you did not give me an opportunity to explain myself fully when just now I alluded to the difference in your dispositions. There is something else to be considered which is possibly a graver matter."

"What may that be?"

"Why, the difference in the ways you have both been brought up. She has been nurtured in the lap of luxury, and has never had a want that has not been supplied. I need not remind you that you have never had free access to the wealth of Croesus. You know how to practice economy; Cicely does not. You understand something of the nature of self-denial; but she has never known what it is to deprive herself of anything she wanted. What does she know about such poverty as you have faced all your life? Have you thought of this? Do you think she will be satisfied with such an environment as you can create for her away out here?"

"I may say that I have thought almost nothing about it, because the necessity for the discussion of such questions is not likely to arise. She will never be called on to face such difficulties as you have hinted at. I am sure I shall never ask her to come to China."

Seeing the uselessness of pressing the matter, Bernard said:

"Well, never mind. Don't be despondent, but cheer up, old man, and let us be hopeful!"

"I understand the situation too well to entertain any hope."

"'All things come to him who waits' is an old saying. Possess your soul in peace. I do not like to

suggest any source of comfort based upon a gruesome hypothesis, but my uncle is advancing in years and must pass off the stage before any great while, and then my fair cousin will have no good reason to refuse to join us. So, cheer up!"

"If I had made such a suggestion," replied Mark, with a smile, "you would have said the wish was father to the thought. I don't believe my conscience has sunken to such a stage of degradation yet. I should dislike to think that my happiness depends upon calamity to other people. I will bear my trouble the best I can, and as one way of relief, I am going to work harder than ever."

Accordingly, Mark worked day and night till his friend warned him of the danger of too intense application. That which Bernard feared, at last occurred. Over-work in connection with despondency and melancholy finally affected a declension of health. Here we leave him for the present and turn our attention to another person of our story; it is Cicely Bradford. Amid the circumstances by which she was surrounded, she did not have access to the consolations that are incidental to the exactions and distractions of constant and pressing occupation. A man staggering under a burden of disappointed hopes can fly from one scene of mental intoxication and excitability to another. But a woman, handicapped by

the restrictions which society imposes, is more closely confined to solitude. Cicely, therefore, endured her trial in secret sorrow. The poet has said that "man's love is of man's life a thing apart; 'tis woman's whole existence." Whether this is true or not, it was a serious affair with Cicely. Major Bradford sometimes talked to her in his brusque and thoughtless way in kindness of heart. He did not understand her, and, of course, could not properly sympathize with her.

One morning, noticing her depression produced by a letter she had received from Bernard Graham, he abruptly broached the subject which had not been mentioned since Mark's departure.

"Cicely, my dear child, are you going to throw away your life for the sake of Mark Comerson? I tell you again, as I have told you before, he is not worthy of your grief, nor of the sacrifice you are making. Mind, I am saying nothing against his moral character. So far as that is concerned, you have nothing for which to reproach yourself. I am extremely sorry that you have suffered yourself to become so entangled; but what is the use of grieving yourself to death on account of his obstinate folly? If he had proposed to aspire no higher than the position of a Methodist circuit rider, I would have consented that you should marry him, because it seemed

that nothing else would satisfy you. But he has gone out of your life, and I think it is high time you should drop him out of your thoughts."

"That is easier said than done, father," she answered, with composure. "As you say, you had consented to our marriage and I had looked upon it as a certainty. To have all my anticipations suddenly blasted by such an abrupt termination was, of course, a great shock, since it was so unexpected. You have never found the slightest objection against his character, and you have admired his stubbornness of purpose. I confess my love for him has been increased by his conscientious scruples. I studied him closely, father, before I gained my own consent to trust my happiness to his keeping. He is a man whom you are bound to respect for his sterling qualities of mind and heart. He has the courage of his convictions. He is the sort of man to become martyr to his principles. He is so free from hypocrisy and cant that you cannot but admire the transparency of his character. How could I help loving him? You have said that he was lacking in energy. No occasion has ever arisen to evoke his energies till recently. His obstinate adherence to principle, I am sure, was called forth in a most terrible way. I have to-day received a letter from cousin Bernard Graham, in which he says that Mark is full of enthusiastic en-

ergy. He has at last discovered the work for which he is fitted by nature and education. Bernard says in this letter that he never saw such an indefatigable worker, and he fears that Mark will permanently injure himself by the wreckless expenditure of that very energy in which you have said he is so deficient. Then, the cause which he has espoused is the most glorious that can call forth human energy. Since he left I have read a great deal about it. What can be more noble and grand than devoting one's life, soul and body to the uplifting of mankind! Mark has responded with his whole heart to the call of Christ. He is now working where he can see with his own eyes the horrors of heathen superstition, and his soul is on fire, as Bernard writes me. I feel that I could cheer him up, if I were with him, and I am beginning to think that the call of Christ is meant for me, too."

Cicely had spoken all this with a glowing countenance and with animation that made her father look at her in astonishment. But her last words were rather startling.

"What!" he cried. "Have you changed your mind? Didn't you tell Mark that you would not go to China? Didn't you promise me the same thing? You are suffering yourself to brood over this matter

till you are catching this wild spirit. Will you leave me, Cicely?"

The Major asked this in so sad a tone that Cicely quickly answered:

"No, no, father, not without your permission; *I* promised you that."

"Stick to that, child, and I will try to cure you of this folly. I declare, Cicely, I cannot see how this foreign mission business is so attractive to you. How is it possible that you can fancy existence among savages and Cannibals?"

"Cannibals, father!" in surprise.

"Yes, Cannibals. I have read about their seizing ship-wrecked people, who were unfortunately cast upon their shores—roasting them over slow fires, and then devouring them half-cooked, with the rapacity of wild, hungry brutes. You would make a nice tid-bit for the beasts," clapping his hands gleefully. "Ugh! it makes my flesh crawl to think about your trying to carry the blessings of civilization and refinement to the reeking scum of humanity."

"But, father, it was a long time ago that you read such horrid stories. No doubt, a number of missionaries have lost their lives in that way; but that feature of barbarism is not in existence now. Christianity has accomplished wonders among them. Their emergence from the lowest and most degrading

form of heathenism is marvelous. Even if their conversion is superficial—as I have heard you say—it is worth the labor and treasure expended for their elevation to a higher plane of moral life."

"Well, child, you may do all you want to, just so you stay at home with me. You can have all the money you desire to send missionaries to them, just so you don't go yourself. I, myself, think the whole business a kind of moral fad that is costing the church millions of money every year; but these over-zealous Christians must have something to occupy their superfluous energies. After awhile it will play out, just as every other fad does."

"I think you are mistaken there, father. The church is just beginning to wake up from her lethargy. I am reading up on the subject. Only a short time since—comparatively, of course,—the idea of sending the Gospel to the heathen nations was considered perfectly preposterous. Even good people received the first proposal with hissing derision. But a revolution has taken place. The earnest cry is coming up from every quarter of the globe, 'come over and help us.' Young men—a large number of them—are offering themselves as candidates for this beneficent work. This 'fad,' as you—excuse me, father—so irreverently called it, is just in the incipient state. It is taking hold of all classes and de-

nominations of Christians, and even the luke-warm are becoming zealous. Oh, it is a glorious work, father, and the whole world will at last be filled with the glory of God," cried Cicely, with increasing enthusiasm that caused her father to look at her in doubt. The terrible suspicion darted through his mind that she might be losing her senses. He knew some people who had "gone crazy" on the subject of religion, and the thought that such might be the fate of his beloved daughter produced a painful sensation in his sinking heart. Thinking it would be well to distract her thoughts from the subject, he said with a sigh:

"Cicely, I wish you would quit thinking about such things and pay more attention to your own individual interest. I am advancing in years, and I cannot be here any great while longer to watch over you. The height of my ambition now is to see you under the protection of a good husband, whom you can be proud of. If you do not fancy Mr. Lagrue, you could marry some other congressman or senator, if you would turn your mind to politics. Suppose we take a trip to Washington, where you can see some of the celebrities whom you might bring to your feet," he said, with a show of jocularity. "Who knows but you might capture a Duke or Count, or some other star-bespangled fellow, who has a title to

nobility? They will not be hard to catch, if you will bait your hook with a little gold-dust. I read in the papers that they bite as quickly and greedily as the most ravenous sharks."

"I have supreme contempt for all such adventurers," said Cicely, with seriousness. "The most of them are silly cox combs, and they come over here for the sole purpose of repairing their broken fortunes. The impecunious simpletons are not worth picking up in the road; and yet some of our American girls—who have some sense too—throw themselves away on this European trash for the sake of wearing a title. I would lose my self-respect if I could entertain the thought of entering into such a loveless, unholy alliance. Our heiresses ought to have sense enough to know that they are sought for their money alone. What happiness they can expect to find in such shameful marriages is beyond my comprehension."

"Hurrah for you, Cicely!" sportively exclaimed the Major. "'Them's my sentiments,' as old Mr. Slang says. You have the good sense to be satisfied with a plain, honest man, like—like Lagrue—whom you cannot but admire, even if you could not love him. By the way, he is in town again, and would like to call on you. Would you object to his visit?"

"Of course not, father, if it would afford him or

you any pleasure. I shall not be so ill-mannered as to refuse to see him. But I warn you that it will be utterly useless for him to renew his suit if that is his intention."

Accordingly, that very evening, by the delicate maneuvering of Major Bradford, saw Mr. Lagrue enter the parlor where Cicely greeted him in a friendly manner. There was no denying the fact that he was an accomplished, refined and very handsome gentleman, worth any woman's consideration, who was contemplating the renunciation of unwedded solitariness. But such recommendations made no impression upon the mind of Cicely. After awhile, he said:

"You are still employing your hours in the enjoyment of suburban life, of which I had hoped you would become weary. You may remember that in our last interview, you did not reject my suit in so emphatic a way as to destroy every shadow of hope. I have clung with tenacity to that little hope, vague as it was. Now I have come again to renew my solicitations and earnest entreaties. I make you the same offers as I did then. I throw all at your feet. You told me then that you were not engaged. Is it impudent to ask if there has been any change in your life in that respect. If there has been, I will not

insult you by asking you to consider me a suitor for your hand."

Cicely thought this very cool and formal language to issue from the lips of an ardent lover; but she did not feel interest enough to attempt to measure the depth of his affection.

"No, Mr. Lagrue," she answered calmly. "I am not engaged, but the same reasons I had then for not wishing to hear your proposal are still in existence—possibly with greater force."

"Oh!" he exclaimed with more fervor. "Is there nothing I can do or say to induce you to consider my offer? I promise you a fine home in Washington, or anywhere else you may prefer, with every luxury that money can procure. I offer you the deepest love of my heart. Do not tell me that all my urging is in vain."

"All this is very flattering to my vanity, Mr. Lagrue. I have the greatest respect for you, but what would be an elegant home to me without love?"

"I would make you love me, if you would give me the opportunity," he eagerly interrupted.

"You could not do so by holding out as inducements such pleasures as mere wealth can offer. Money cannot make home happy."

"No, not that alone; and yet it can help. I am sure the pleasures which can be procured with gold

are preferable to the ills of poverty. Love in a cottage will do for the poets to make rhymes, but I imagine that the warmest affection might be somewhat chilled by the freezing winds of winter."

"It is utterly useless, Mr. Lagrue, for us to discuss such a subject. You and I are under no necessity of disputing over the advantages or disadvantages of love in a cottage. I do not like to give you pain, but the plain truth is I do not love you well enough to marry you."

Mr. Lagrue at last perceived the folly of insistence and took his leave, determining never again to mention this delicate subject to Cicely Bradford.

CHAPTER XIII.

Anxiety.

MONTHS slowly passed away—very slowly, according to the view of some of the personages of this story. Cicely had not made the improvement in spirits which Major Bradford had allowed himself to anticipate. He had thought that absence would be a sovereign remedy for the suppression of disappointed love. He had not doubted the existence of a mutual affection between Mark and Cicely, but he had imagined that—or hoped that—it might be only a youthful fancy which separation, in conjunction with the flight of time, would effectually obliterate, and which, both parties, after they had acquired the experience of maturer years, would laugh at as a pleasant ebullition of early indiscretions. Such had been his own experience in more than one instance, and he conceived that the case of this young couple was not exceptional. He was, therefore, disagreeably surprised to discover that his daughter was losing her elasticity and bouyancy. She appeared to be listless and sorrowful, though making no complaint. Finally a slow fever

made its appearance, but whether caused by the condition of her affections, we pretend not to say. Was it by the esoteric operation of some psychological principle with whose nature we are not acquainted—the investigations of science not having revealed it as yet? What disposition shall we make of the fact that she and Mark were affected about the same time and about the same way? Will we be thought too far in advance of the medical—rather psychological—progress of the age to suggest that the contagion of physical elements was possible through the mysterious connection of soul with soul, notwithstanding the intervention between them of thousands of miles? Will such a belief be called superstition or spiritualism? At this stage of mental science, we have not the temerity to express any opinion. At last, it is only a suggestion which the intelligent reader—of the masculine gender—may "put in his pipe to smoke." However, be that as it may; it is certain at the time that neither one was acquainted with the condition of the other, otherwise the fact might have been traced to conscious collusion.

Cicely gradually declined till she was forced to take her bed—and this greatly alarmed her father. The family physician, Dr. Dunlap, was called in. after making a careful and rigid examination, he appeared to be at a loss for a definite diagnosis. He said to Major Bradford:

"If you have no objection, I should like a consultation with Dr. John Wright."

"Certainly; I would as soon have him as anybody. You are both men of experience, and I have the utmost confidence in your judgment."

Accordingly, the two physicians met at the bedside of the patient. They were personal friends, and were frequently associated together in consultation, and oftener than otherwise addressed each other by their Christian names.

"I would like for you to make your diagnosis without suggestion or question from me. Just proceed as if I were not here."

Accordingly, Dr. Wright, with his stethoscope, examined her chest and questioned her as to her habits. After awhile the two physicians went into another room.

"Well, what is your conclusion?" asked Dr. Dunlap.

"I had a very similar case not long ago," replied Dr. Wright, "and my opinion is that some secret grief is preying upon the mind of Miss Cicely. Her lungs and her heart are in a perfectly sound condition, and so are all her physical organs, so far as I can judge. So, I am forced to the conclusion that the trouble is more mental than anything else. That was the difficulty with the young lady, to whom I had reference

just now, as I learned from her mother. If that is not true, I confess my bewilderment."

"I think your diagnosis is correct," said Dr. Dunlap, "and you have made it without the suggestion of a clew from me, and that confirms my opinion."

After some further conversation, they returned to Major Bradford, who was sitting in the parlor, awaiting their report.

"Major," said Dr. Dunlap, "I have been practicing in your family a long time, and am acquainted with Cicely's constitutional pecularities, but there is something in the case that confuses myself and Dr. Wright. Her trouble is chiefly in the mind. Of course I do not know what she is brooding over, but you may possibly know. If you do not know, I advise you to ascertain, so you will know what remedy to apply. We physicians administer medicine for the benefit of the body only."

"You are both my friends, and I don't mind talking to you freely, and I will be candid. Perhaps you can advise me. I am not positively certain as to the trouble with Cicely, but I begin to suspect. You have heard of her love affair with Mark Comerson?"

"I have never heard anything, Major," answered Dr. Wright.

"Since you have asked the question, Major," said Dr. Dunlap, "I have heard a rumor that they were

engaged to be married, but I paid no special attention to it—we can hear so much about such things."

"Well, to be candid, I tell you as physicians, that I begin to believe that Cicely thought too much of him. Indeed, they were both affected in the same foolish way."

"Why do you call it foolish?" asked Dr. Dunlap.

"Because, for one reason, I was convinced of their unsuitability. Mark was no good match for her. But no matter, when he determined to go to China, she refused to consummate the engagement. You could not blame her for not wanting to go to that God-forsaken country. Mark has always been as obstinate as a mule, and he declared he would go alone. They broke off the engagement by mutual consent—and that suited my notions, too. But, telling you as physicians, remember the truth is Cicely has moped ever since. I believe her chief reason for not marrying him at all hazards was her reluctance to displease me. She told Mark that it was not her duty to leave me. He said not a word to dissuade her, but merely declared that he was afraid to disobey the call of Christ, as he called it. So he instantly bundled up and pitched out for China. I never have approved of the marriage. Mark is so wanting in executive ability."

"But he is a splendid young man, Major," said Dr. Dunlap, "and everybody speaks well of him."

"Oh, in his way," replied the Major, carelessly; "but he seemed to have no business sense—not even as much as Cicely has. I thought she would soon get over the folly, but it seems I am mistaken. What to do about it is more than I know. I have candidly laid the situation before you, and if you can suggest any remedy, I would be very glad."

"Is the engagement," asked Dr. Dunlap, with delicate caution, "so totally disrupted that it could not be renewed?"

"Oh, as to that, I suppose it could be renewed at any time, but Cicely would not agree to do it without my consent, and I do not see how I can give that. I do not want the marriage to take place if it is possible to prevent it. I think it would not be best for Cicely."

"But, Major," said Dr. Dunlap, "would you withhold your consent if you were convinced that her very life depended on it?"

"Oh, in that kind of unpleasant emergency, of course, I would have to surrender. But I hope matters have not reached such an undesirable crisis as that."

"Why are you so bitterly opposed to it?" asked Dr. Dunlap, thoughtfully.

"Because, the only object I have in view is Cicely's

happiness. I am of the opinion that, after the honeymoon, both of them would repent of the marriage. All young people in such grave affairs are nothing but innocent goslings that sadly need the direction of older heads. That is my honest opinion, based upon years of observation."

"And my opinion," said Dr. Dunlap, presuming upon their years of intimate friendship, "my opinion—if you will pardon me for offering it—is that your opinion is rather gratuitous. I tell you candidly, Major, you are assuming a responsibility that I should not care to shoulder. But I have made my diagnosis—and Dr. Wright has made his—and we are both in perfect accord. We can only leave the matter in your hands."

"Don't you propose to give her medicine?"

"Dr. Dunlap," answered Dr. Wright, "has prescribed all that we conceive necessary."

The two physicians then took their leave.

Two or three days after this the Major placed a letter in Cicely's hands, as she lay on her bed. She glanced at the post-mark, and instantly a flush of excitement incarnadined her cheeks; her listlessness and indifference to her surroundings were replaced by indications of mental activity; her sudden eagerness of manner did not escape the Major's notice, and he inquired who had written it.

"It is from cousin Bernard," she replied, after she had opened the envelope and perceived the author's subscription.

"I guess you would rather be alone while you are reading it, so," said the Major, rising, "I will retire and leave you to yourself."

Cicely at once lost consciousness of her environment and became absorbed in the contents of the closely-written sheets. Bernard began by giving an account of his station, and then of his feelings. But he soon broke off from his own affairs and wrote:

"However, I think you will be more deeply interested in another subject than my humble and insignificant self. Now, I am fully acquainted with the relations between you and Mark Comerson, and if I wrote nothing about him, you would not pardon the omission. To relieve you of all annoying suspense, I will say, *imprimis,* that his health is not exactly first-class, though his doctor thinks he has passed the crisis some days ago."

Cicely, reading this, almost let the epistle fall from her hands. It was the first she had heard of his sickness. He must have approached near death's door—a thought that caused a deeper pallor to over-spread her fair features. But, after a brief pause, she resumed:

"I don't want you to be alarmed about him. But,

may be, I am too hasty, for how do I know that your sentiments toward him have not undergone a change, so that you feel no more interest in his affairs than any other martyr with whom you are moderately acquainted. He has told me—of course, you could expect nothing else than that I should be made the receptacle of his secrets—that he believed you once cared a little for him. But you have been separated so long that some other image may have stolen into your heart."

"Oh," said Cicely to herself, "how little he knows about human nature!"

But the letter went on:

"I suppose you are still his warm friend, and, therefore, you may be just a little rejoiced to learn that in person he will follow this letter in a week at most."

Cicely almost sprang out of the bed. He was then on his way home. The epistle had only seven days the start. He could not, therefore, be far away, comparatively. The thought caused her heart to palpitate with wild, but joyful emotion. It was in a furious flutter, and her limbs quivered. It was well that her father had retired. She would blush with shame to let him witness this involuntary outgush of feeling.

"I hope," the letter continued, "that you will do

what you can to help him recover his health. I know you are able to cheer him up, if you will only try. I am very anxious that Mark shall be himself again. He had but fairly started in his blessed work. Mark was always a good linguist, and it was wonderful how rapidly he acquired the tongue of China. But, then, he can do anything to which he sets his heart. I never saw such untiring application to study. I am sure that his diligence was partly to blame for the failure of his health. When he returns he will not be exposed to the same danger from overwork."

Cicely's palpitation of heart began to subside as she took in the meaning of the last sentence. If it was his purpose to go back, was not her secret rejoicing premature? The trouble would be to all go over again. He would, perhaps, remain at home a few weeks—maybe months—and then there would be the same intolerably painful leave-taking. She did not dare to hope that he could be persuaded to abandon the foreign work. Would her conscience suffer her to attempt to thwart what seemed to be the divine will? Mark had sacrificed his happiness, himself—everything on the altar of self-denial. Had she not grace enough to exercise the same sublime, heroic faith?

The letter continued:

"Speaking of his return to this country, I can no longer refrain from asking if you will permit him to come back alone? I have been thinking about it and praying over it. I hope God will put it into your heart to be his companion. But I dare not urge you, as I would be far from encouraging you to offer rebellion against your father's will. Bear it in mind that Mark has told me all about it, and how my uncle opposed your going, and how you promised him that you would not leave the parental roof without his permission. But I have thought that, if you were still loyal to Mark, your kind father might relent. I can only hope. I do not fear to say that, with you at his side, he could do better work. Indeed, your coming would revolutionize the whole business. A great responsibility is resting upon you, my dear cousin, and I pray that God will direct you to a wise decision."

Cicely leisurely folded the letter and lay back upon her pillow to reflect. While thus employed her father re-entered the room.

"What is the news in your letter, Cicely?"

"Father, the news is," she answered, with as much tranquillity as the circumstances would allow, "that Mark is on his way home—possibly already in the United States."

"I am surprised to hear it," he remarked, without

the least show of gladness, "for I thought he had gone to stay. Are you glad that he has come back?"

"I would be deceiving you, father," she answered, with a little, sad smile, "if I were to say that I am sorry. How can you ask me that? I have never tried to hide my love from you."

"But I thought that separation would cure you both, and that you would forget the mild escapade; and I thought, Cicely, that you were too strong-minded a girl to grieve for a man who leaves you to make all the sacrifices."

"Do you think, father, he has made no sacrifices?"

"Nothing like yours, child. He had no home of any great consequence and no fortune. All he had to do was to pack his valise and be off to China."

"You have forgotten his parents and his many friends, and you are overlooking me, whom he certainly loved."

"You need not tell me, Cicely, that I would have treated your mother as he has treated you. I would have allowed nothing to come between me and her."

"What about conscience, father? You omit that. Had it not been for his conscientious scruples, I am perfectly convinced that he would have made any sacrifice for me."

"There is no use of talking any more about it," he

said, testily. Mark has come back, and he will persuade you to marry him and leave me."

"I promised you, father, that I would never quit my home without your permission, and I will remain with you, though it may cost me my life."

The Major looked hard at her, and without speaking, left the apartment.

CHAPTER XIV.

Finalities.

CICELY rapidly recovered after Mark's return, which occurred a week from the reception of Bernard's letter. Drs. Dunlap and Wright were confirmed in their opinion that her illness had been caused—or at least greatly increased by her secret sorrow. It was due to one of them that the course of our story was changed—as will be presently seen. Neither did it require any great lapse of time for the restoration of Mark's health. But his mind was soon occupied with another question of the most vital importance. When he agreed to take the trip home—which his physicians had advised—it was under the stipulation that he was to return as soon as it would be consistent with safety. The reader has already learned that Mark, when once he had reached a decision of any question of importance—especially one involving the convictions of conscience—he was as immovable as the rock of Gibraltar. Let the consequences be what they might, he would be obedient to the voice of the Secret Monitor. This loyalty Major Bradford, who seemed to be im-

pervious to religious convictions, called obstinacy. In a painful state of mind he again met Cicely.

"It has been a severe trial to me, Cicely," he said, when they began to talk of the past. "Sometimes I fear it is a sin to suffer my affection to be so totally absorbed by a human being. Thoughts of you are always mingling with the performance of my most solemn duties."

"Would it not be worse, then," she asked, timidly, "if I were constantly with you?"

"No, no; your presence would be an inspiration and a stimulus to greater work. But I suppose it is useless to talk about that, unless your mind has undergone a great change. You cannot return with me?"

"Not without father's consent."

"And he has not relented, as I can perceive from your manner. Well," he continued, after a distressing pause, "I will have to return, though I believe it will kill me—however, not immediately, but finally. I do not believe I can live without you."

"Oh, Mark, say not so. Is it no relief to you to think that I, too, will suffer? The truth is, it came very near destroying my health. I believe, Mark"—with moistened eyes and crimson cheeks—"that I would have died, if you had not returned. I com-

menced to improve as soon as I received cousin Bernards's letter."

"How will it be, then, when I leave the second time?"

"Oh, I dread to think about it! Is there no way to avoid paying this fearful price? I don't want you to go back and leave me. I wouldn't talk this way if I did not know that you love me. As it is, I blush to tell you. Must you, then, go back when we can foresee the consequence?"

"I must go," he cried in desperation, "though we both die for it."

"But, Mark, it does seem to me that the merciful God ought to interfere in some way to prevent such tragedies as you mention. What have we done to deserve such punishment? What has become of all the promises He has made to His followers?"

"The ways of Providence are very mysterious. Misfortunes—as they appear to us—are often blessings in disguise. Our lot seems hard and unnecessary; and yet the Lord may be leading us along a thorny pathway to a source of happiness that would not be possible in any other way. But suppose we lay this matter before your father? It may be, since he has seen your suffering—if not mine—that he will repent. Anyhow, there can be no harm in trying."

"I have little hope of relief in appealing to him,

Mark—his views are so different from ours. However, we can try it. Shall I invite him to come now?"

"Yes, if you think it advisable."

In a few moments the trio again faced each other, as they had done on a similar occasion, which the reader—if he or she possesses a tolerable memory, can recall. The Major quietly entered the parlor and seated himself, no doubt, anticipating the purpose which he had been invited to discuss. He bore himself as one whose mind was fully made up, and clad in steel armor against any persuasion.

"Well," began the Major, kindly, "I hope your object in asking this interview is to communicate to me the good news that the previous engagement, which was once a gloomy fact, is now definitely and amicably broken off for all time. You have both had time to see the impropriety of its continuance. You know by experience that you can live comfortably apart. However, if I am mistaken, Mark"—turning to him, "and you come back to remain in this country—even to preach—I will be as good as my word, and I yield my preference, but I do so, to be candid, with reluctance. You both know very well what I think about it."

"But, Major, I intend to return to China. The Call of Christ allows me no other choice. I must go at all hazards."

"But you haven't come here to ask my consent to your marriage with Cicely under such circumstances? I thought both of you had gotten over that silly fancy by this time."

"You seem disposed, Major, to treat us as children," said Mark, dryly.

"Not exactly as children—though in some respects you are nothing more. You are young people of very limited experience, and you imagine that, because you liked each other as playmates, you must be in love, as they call it. If you had taken my advice and remained apart two or three years, you would have found some other sweethearts with whom you would have been as deeply smitten!" said the Major, laughing. "I know all about it from my very own experience. Why, I loved a half dozen blooming young maidens for any one of whom I would have been willing to die." And the Major laughed boisterously. "But I was separated from them, and it was not long before I felt ashamed of my boyish indiscretions."

"But my mother was not one of them," said Cicely.

"No, she was not, and I loved her with the maturity of manhood."

"Cicely and I are about grown," said Mark, smiling, "and I think we have been sufficiently tested by

time and absence to determine the possibility of the continuance of our sentiments."

"There is no use of discussing such things, Mark," said the Major, a little peevishly. "You know my opinions. Do you ask me to change them?"

"I ask nothing at your hands, Major, and never have. I thought I would place the facts before you and abide your decision. If you decide against us, we will have to submit as best we can and wait for future developments."

"Well, then," said the Major, looking at Mark, "go back to your preaching in China. If I ever consent to gratify your wishes, it will be when I am convinced there is no other alternative possible. Let us drop the subject forever."

Saying this, the Major strode out of the parlor, with an air indicative of belief that the matter was settled for all time.

"What next, Cicely?" asked Mark, after the Major had disappeared.

"I don't know, Mark," she answered, while the tears flowed down her cheeks. "I am in the clutches of despair. I cannot leave father without his consent, and you have just heard what he said about it. I feel that if we separate again it will be the death of me. If father were convinced of that, I know he

would no longer oppose our wishes. But, I fear he will never be convinced till too late."

"Cicely," he said,, with sad thoughtfulness, "would you have me to abandon my intention of returning to China? Your father said he would consent to our marriage, if I would remain in this country. That is one way of relief."

"No, no; I am afraid for you to do that. If it is God's will that we should sacrifice even our lives on the altar of foreign missions, so let it be. We must be resigned to it."

"Surely," exclaimed Mark, with emotion, "God will not inflict upon us greater chastisement than we can bear. It does seem that such devotion as ours to His cause ought not to bring such heavy misfortune upon us. I am beginning to feel," continued Mark, with brightening countenance "that something will happen for our relief."

The Christian frequently has such presentiments when his faithful prayers are about to be answered. The clouds unexpectedly break and roll away while the answer is slowly rising up to the horizon of reality. Certainly there is no way to prove this, according to the world's mode of reasoning. It demands what it is pleased to call ocular demonstration, regardless of the fact that if it were furnished, it would soon be rejected as proof of divine interven-

tion. For answers to prayers would then come down to the level of natural occurrences. So, it is useless to contend with the unbeliever for special providences.

Anyhow, the next morning Major Bradford received a call from Dr. Dunlap. The physician, as soon as he was seated, drew a letter from his pocket, and handing it to the Major, said:

"I have just received this from Bernard Graham. Read it, if you please. My acquaintance with the young man is limited. Mark must have told him about my relation to your family. And that is the explanation of the letter."

We need not impose a tax upon the reader's patience by detailing the contents of the epistle, nor by giving even excerpts from it. After apologizing for writing to the doctor, he proceeded to detail some of the particular features of Mark's illness, and then requested him to act according to the dictates of his own judgment.

Major Bradford thoughtfully perused the letter, and handing it back to the physician, said, inquiringly:

"Well, what have I to do with it?"

"You have all to do with it, Major. If Mark returns to China alone—you know what I mean—my opinion is that he will die in a year or two."

"That's his own lookout," replied the Major, bluntly. "I am not sending him to China."

"No, Major; that is true enough. You are not responsible in one sense. He is a grown man and must decide for himself. But the question that more directly concerns you, is what is to become of Cicely? I informed you that I believed her recent sickness, if not caused, was greatly aggravated by secret sorrow. My opinion was confirmed by Dr. Wright, who made his diagnosis without the shadow of a clew from me. I now know positively what the sorrow was. Just see how quickly it was relieved when the cause was removed. Just look at Mark, too. Both of them are in the enjoyment of the most robust health. It was a strange coincidence that both were afflicted in pretty much the same way, and both recovered in a similar way. I do not pretend to account for it, but merely state facts. You can draw your own inferences."

"Oh, doctor," burst out the Major in a laugh, "that is the veriest bosh! You are too old a man to believe such stuff. You know that young people often meet and imagine that they are desperately enamored. Circumstances throw them apart and away goes their puppy love. That is generally the way, and you have seen it as well as I."

"Yes, and I have seen the opposite, too. Some

young people have their affection so deeply aroused that nothing but death can crush it. A few such cases have come under my own observation. The present is the most remarkable case with which I have ever come in contact. I am talking to you freely because I love Cicely almost as much as if she were my own child. You may laugh if you will, but I will venture to predict that, if Mark goes back to China without her—and she is left alone to battle with her own grief—she will again pine away—droop like a flower plucked from its stem—and there is nothing in the whole *materia medica* that can afford her relief. The only remedy will be Mark's return. In the absence of that you will follow her to the grave in probably two years. I am basing my prophecy on what has already occurred."

"Oh, doctor," answered the Major, a little testily, but somewhat staggered by the physician's asseveration. He was greatly perplexed, for he had confidence in Dr. Dunlap's judgment. But he said in his blunt way:

"Oh, doctor! I believe you feel an interest in this couple, and you are their advocate—is it not so? And are you not trying to force me into measures?"

"If I thought you meant that," answered Dr. Dunlap, repressing a feeling of slight indignation, "I should take it as an insult. But you know me too

well to believe that I would stoop to such contemptible chicanery as that. Neither one of them knew that I would approach you on the subject. I am acting on my own responsibility. I tell you, I was never more in earnest about anything in my life."

"What would you have me to do, then?"

"That is for you to determine. I have stated the facts in the case, and you must follow your own judgment. I have indicated the cause of the disease, but it does not devolve on me to point out the remedy. That belongs to you. I have said enough, and I will now leave you to your reflections."

And Major Bradford did reflect. The result of his reflections can be ascertained from the brief interview, which occurred at his house, with Cicely and Mark, for whom he had sent. The two calmly looked at him as he asked them to be seated. They both saw from his countenance that the harshness of the preceding day was replaced by an expression of comparative benevolence.

"Children," he began in a kind tone that at once awakened the brightest hopes, "I have spoken, perhaps, severe words to both of you, but I was honest in my convictions of duty. I have at last come to the conclusion that I have acted too hastily. I have been the cause of sorrow to both of you, but I make all

the amends I can, and I withdraw all opposition to your marriage."

"But, dear father," said Cicely, after recovering from her surprise, "what will you do? How can we leave you alone?"

"You will not leave me alone, for I am going with you to China."

Further prolongations of our story is rendered unnecessary by the fact that the intelligent reader can easily imagine the felicitous events that followed.

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR.

Fiery Trials—A story of an Infidel's family,. .$1.25

Golden Rule—A tale of Texas, ... .75

The End of the World, ... .50

All three of these books will be mailed, prepaid, for $2.25. Address

Rev. R. H. Crozier,
Palestine, Texas.